

**My forty-five years  
on the  
CAMPUS**



**by Reg Lister**



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on the  
CAMPUS





## FOREWORD

In this, the Jubilee Year of the University of Alberta, it can be said with confidence that no one on the Campus is more widely known or remembered with greater affection than Reg Lister, Superintendent of Residences.

This little book is Mr. Lister's story, written to preserve some account of residence life for his thousands of friends and for the record of history. It spans nearly half a century of a busy life of service to the University he loves.

We are indebted to Dr. M. H. Scargill, Warden of Athabasca, and to Mrs. Scargill, out of whose conversations with Mr. Lister the idea of a book was born. Mrs. Scargill typed the original manuscript.

The story has been edited for publication by Elsie Park Gowan, ex-Pembinita and Gateway editor, now an Alberta playwright. We are grateful for her assistance and for her suggestion that, as an epilogue, the "Lister Story" should carry the text of the tribute paid by Dr. Robert Newton, then President of the University, at the Convocation of 1949 when Reg received the rank and title of Honorary Member of Convocation.

We hope and trust that "My Forty-Five Years on the Campus" will be read and treasured by Mr. Lister's many friends now scattered throughout the world.

WALTER H. JOHNS,  
*Vice-President*

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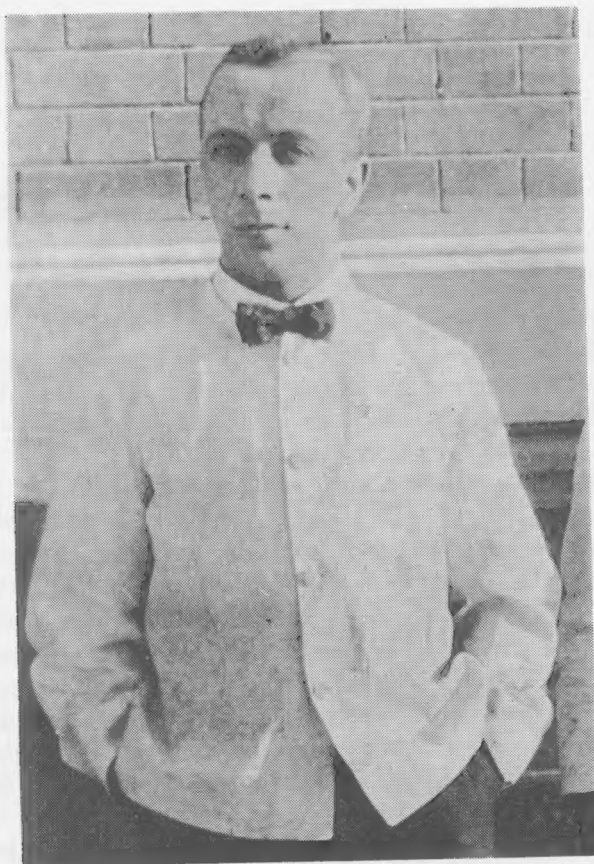
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*Mr. Lister in 1914*



# I

## MAN FINDS JOB

*English background*

*Arrival in Canada. 1910*

*Digging in construction days. 1911*

*Mr. Hartley :- Dr. Tory :- Mr. Burgess*

### *English background*

I was born on December 31, 1891, at Hingham, a small village near Norwich, England. Hingham is a quaint old place where most of the houses are a thousand years old. I was christened in the old Norman church, St. Andrews. To this day you can see the damage Cromwell's soldiers did to St. Peter and St. Paul, whose statues stand in the chancel with their heads knocked off.

Hingham was the place Abraham Lincoln's ancestors came from. The statute of him on the village green was put there by the Americans from Hingham, Massachusetts.

There were ten in our family, six boys and four girls. My father had a small shop in Hingham and made rounds every day to the villages nearby. He had a wagon that held everything from coal oil to tea and cocoa, dishes, brushes, and hats. As small children we loved going his rounds with him, holding the horse at the cottage doors while he made his sales.

I started school at three years of age so that by the time I was twelve I had reached the top of the grades. But I could not leave school till I was fourteen; so for two years I had a part time job at Hingham Grammar School. For two shillings a week, I cleaned twenty pairs of student shoes every morning, scoured knives, helped the maid in the bedrooms, carried coal, water, fed the hens, gathered the eggs, pumped the water tank and carried out ashes.

After I left school I got a job as a house and garden boy in the Manor House belonging to a maiden lady, Miss Gertrude Crawshay, who came of a family of brewers. She lived alone, except for guests.

The establishment consisted of a butler and footman, ten maids, a coachman, two grooms and ten gardeners. My wages were ten shillings a week.

After two years I went to a Mr. Palmer, who paid me twelve shillings. At Palmers I was allowed a pint of cider in the morning and one in the afternoon. This was real cider, not applejuice. Except for a summer as pantry boy in a guest house at Gorleston-on-Sea, I stayed on this job until I came to Canada.

#### *Arrival in Canada. 1910*

In 1910 I arrived in Alberta and found work on a farm at Heatherbrae, just south of Camrose. My sister Mabel had come out in 1908, and was teaching near there, at the Darsbury School by Dried Meat Lake. I stayed on the farm for a year and later got a job in Ohaton. I took a trip or two to Edmonton but never stayed.

On Coronation Day, 1911, I came to Edmonton to stay. It was a cheap trip; I did not have much money so I had to be careful. While watching the Coronation Parade I saw two boys whom I had known in England, and they told me they were going to start work on the University Campus building some houses. They urged me to come along with them and get a job.

#### *Digging in construction days. 1911*

I was staying with my aunt, so she packed me a lunch, and I left her place at 6 a.m. in order to start work at 7. The boys took me to the foreman and I asked for a job. He said that I was too small, but he would try me out. The job was digging the basement for the President's Residence, Number 1, University Campus. As I had never seen a house being built, let alone work on one, the work was all new to me. But I worked hard and got along with the men, so the foreman kept me on at 25 cents a hour.

We worked from 7 a.m. until 6 p.m., six days a week; so that if we had no wet days we could make \$15.00 a week. I was used to long hours as in England I had worked from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m., so if I got a chance of a few hours overtime, I took it. I worked with bricklayers and did anything there was to do. But the hardest work of all was mixing cement by shovel on a board.

#### *Mr. Hartley :- Dr. Tory :- Mr. Burgess*

During the summer, a Mr. Hartley arrived as Superintendent of Building. He gave me the job of laying sewer tile and putting in man-holes across the campus—at 30 cents an hour.

Dr. Tory used to drive around every day with his team of chestnuts, tie them up almost any place in the bush, and then inspect the work that was going on. He always wore a frock coat and striped trousers. He would often stop and chat with the workmen, and he was delighted to see a good bonfire; he told me it reminded him of his younger days in Nova Scotia when he used to gather drift wood and have a fire on the beach.

Mr. Burgess, the University Architect, arrived on the campus about this time—much to the annoyance of Mr. Hartley. Mr. Burgess was a quiet little fellow who said very little, but would stand around watching and jotting down notes. He did not talk to any of the workmen, but we all knew when he came near; and we all knew when he had a session with Hartley, for Hartley could curse a blue streak.

During the winter of 1911, I worked around Athabasca and around the Campus houses, Numbers 1, 2, 3, and 4. No. 1 was occupied by Dr. Tory the President; No. 2 by Professor Edwards; No. 3 by Dr. Kerr; and No. 4 by Professor Lehman. A barn was built behind Dr. Tory's home for his team and buggy.

During 1911 and 1912 I had a "side" job in the Provincial Laboratory working for Dr. Revell. After my regular work, I would spend a couple of hours cleaning up the lab and on wet days, instead of going home, I would work in the lab and give the place a good cleaning. This "side" job brought me in an extra \$15.00 a month.

## II

### THE UNIVERSITY ON THE CAMPUS

*Moving into Athabasca Hall. 1911*

*Who and where*

*Assiniboia Hall. 1912*

*Athabasca Dining Hall and Gym. 1912*

*The Smokestack*

*The Barn*

*The Grounds. 1913-14*

#### *Moving into Athabasca Hall. 1911*

Athabasca Hall was the first building on the campus. Plumbers, steamfitters, carpenters and bricklayers worked all the summer of 1911 getting ready for the students who arrived in the fall.

In September I helped move equipment from the Strathcona Institute which is now Strathcona High School, into Athabasca, where I lit the first fire in the kitchen. It did not draw, so I had to cut the chimney out and put in a bigger thimble before it would burn.

The building stood by itself, surrounded by bush. Where the Arts Building now stands, were an abandoned basement excavated in 1908, and two old shacks. There were no sidewalks or roads. The trails to Athabasca came around sloughs or across the field from 112th Street. There were no trucks or cars in those days and everything had to be hauled by horse and wagon . . . bricks, stone, lumber, furniture, equipment. It was quite a job and often the wagons would get stuck in mud up to the axles.

In 1911, Athabasca was the headquarters for all the University faculties, as well as the residence for 35 men and 7 women.

#### *Who and where*

On the third floor of Athabasca were the Office of the President, Dr. Tory (Room 332); the Registrar's (Room 326), the Cashier sat in the hall, and the Senate Chamber was Room 327. Afterwards the rooms

were made into suites. The Library had the section that is now Rooms 333 to 340. Room 341 was Mr. Edward's office; and there was a small class room where 343 and 346 now are. The bathroom which is 346 was an office, and rooms 349 to 356 were class rooms, and there were class rooms from 301 to 324. On the second floor, rooms 201 to 224 were for men; and the Provost, Dr. MacEachern, had rooms 226 and 227. Mrs. Sheldon, Adviser to Women, had room 232, and 233 to 240 were rooms for lady students. From 241 to 245 were classrooms, and 249 to 256 were the draughting lab. On the first floor, rooms 101 to 124 were for men, and 133 to 140 for staff. Rooms 141 to 145 were the chemistry classroom, and 149 to 156 the chemistry laboratory. The sitting rooms in the front hall were, north for ladies, south for men.

The lounge in Athabasca was then the dining room and the suite off the lounge was the kitchen and above the kitchen were rooms for maids and kitchen help. Under the kitchen were store rooms.

In the basement, 1 to 8 was the testing laboratory, 11 to 15 the stock room, 17 to 24 was a class room, 26 was the pressing room for ladies. In room 32 was the chemistry store room and 33-40 were chemistry lab. Rooms 41 to 56 housed the Provincial Lab.

The boilers to heat the building were under the lounges, and were two low pressure units, fired by coal by hand. The firing was done by students who received their room and board for the work.

A Mr. W. Jullian came as the first caretaker, and Mrs. R. Rawlson the first housekeeper, assisted by Miss J. Brown. Mrs. Caley was the first cook and her husband took care of the boilers in the daytime. The Caleys lived above the kitchen. The Jullians lived in a hut that was left by the old basement of the Arts Building. But when the gas house was finished they moved in there.

*The Gas House*, which now holds the Horticulture Department, was built in the fall of 1911 by Mansfield and sons of Liverpool, England. Since this was before the days of natural gas, the gas had to be made from coal oil and was used in all the labs and for cooking in the kitchens until 1924. I might mention that two of the bricklayers who built the gas house were afterwards killed while working on the Arts Building. A scaffold broke and they fell to the ground.

#### *Assiniboia Hall. 1912*

The basement of Assiniboia Hall was excavated in the fall of 1911, by about one hundred men with shovels and a few horses and wagons. There were no bulldozers to help out. In order to get the foundation in before Christmas, the cement had to be heated. This was done by piling gravel over steel culverts and then burning all the bush around to heat it. By

March 1912 the stonemasons were at work, cutting the stone for the building by hand. The granite base was laid in April and the building finished by October.

The President's and Registrar's offices were moved to Assiniboia, center floor; Dr. Tory on the south side and Mr. C. E. Race on the north. At this time there were three suites on the third floor and three on the second. They were occupied by Dr. Sonet, Dr. Sheldon, Dr. Allan, Dr. Servis and Mr. Burrows, the first librarian of the University. The library and stackrooms were in the north end of basement.

The Extension Department had its start in the basement of Assiniboia under Mr. Ottewell, and also the bookstore and post office were there under Mr. C. Hosford. The Printing Department was in the northwest corner under Mr. Peters.

The first Bursar was Mr. Ashworth who also started out in a small room in the basement of Assiniboia. He afterwards lived in No. 8, University Campus, and was the first man to occupy that house.

The Wauneita Society also started in Assiniboia Hall, and its first lounge was in the basement, Rooms 26 and 24.

The single men of the faculty occupied rooms 149 to 156; and the students had the second and third floors north.

#### *Athabasca Dining Hall and Gym. 1912*

I took a trip back to the old country in November 1912, so that I could spend my twenty-first birthday at home. I arrived back in Canada at the end of March, and started work on the dining room and gymnasium in Athabasca Hall, which were finished and opened in the fall of 1913. All the oak in the ceiling of the dining room was made in the University Carpenter shop, which stood just behind the Hall. A Mr. F. Hiron was the boss.

The new kitchen in Athabasca was fitted with steam tables and steam boilers, stock pots and good gas stoves. All that had been in the old kitchen was a coal stove and a sink. As soon as the installation was complete we moved everything one Friday night, pots, pans, and dishes; and all went well under Miss Dickson's care.

Dances were held in the dining hall and as there were only twelve large tables, nothing had to be moved. There were about 10 tables of men, one of ladies, and one for staff. The gym was used for all P.T. and games, as well as for plays and skits. One night Dr. Broadus fell and broke his arm while refereeing a boxing match.

Sunday mornings, services were held in the gym. Curtains had to be hung over the windows and a platform built and a carpet over the plat-



form. And chairs had to be carried in from the dining room (and returned). Dr. Tory read the lessons or Dr. Sheldon, and the sermon or address was given by a minister or a special speaker.

Mr. Harlow was the representative of the Intercollegiate Y.M.C.A. under whose auspices the services were held.

The dietitian, Miss Dickson, lived in rooms 234 and 236, but when the kitchen was moved, the old kitchen was made into a suite for the dietitian; and when Miss Russell came as dietitian on August 14, 1914, she lived in the suite. She was the first woman with any ability that the University had employed.

### *The Smokestack*

The Smokestack at the rear of Athabasca was built in 1913, and also the first power plant. Mr. J. Wier was the first steam engineer to be employed at the University and he had two firemen who worked 12-hour shifts and 18-hour shifts every weekend. It took five bricklayers a month to build that smokestack; all the bricks were laid from the inside and had to be lifted by a rope. A man named Joe Caswell and myself pulled them all up. As the stack got higher, the bricklayers put steel shafts all the way up inside. There were two scaffolds, one to work on and a lower safety one; with just a hole in the centre to get the men and materials through. Some of the bricklayers wanted to come down on the rope but Mr. Caswell did not like the idea. The big drum was on a stand with iron handles on each side. I held the handle while Joe got a two-by-four to use as a brake. He put one end under the drum and the other end he put on his shoulder. The bricklayers got on the rope and we let him down easy through the safety scaffold. Then Joe let the brake go and the fellow took a drop of about 30 feet before Joe jerked him to a stop with his brake. No more bricklayers wanted to come down on the rope.

### *The Barn*

The Agricultural department's first barn was built in 1913, on the location where my residence stands to-day. The livestock at this time consisted of five dairy cows and four horses. The milk was used in the dining hall, and the horses were used on the farm in the summer; in the winter they hauled coal for the power house.

The first dairyman was Mr. Walter Moser, who came out from Switzerland and later married Matt Halton's sister. Mr. Thompson was the first farm manager and lived in the Gas House.

### *The Grounds. 1913-14*

The maple trees around the residences arrived in 1912. They were about as thick as match-sticks, wrapped up in burlap. A furrow was ploughed behind the buildings and we stuck the seedlings in and ploughed the sod back on to them. They were planted out in 1915.

The first elms were planted by Prof. Harcourt when they were about 3 feet high. They are now higher than the buildings. They were planted after the grounds were terraced and the sidewalks put in, about 1914.

When the basement of Pembina Hall was excavated in 1913, thousands of loads of sand were taken out, as well as the two big rocks that sit by the main side walk outside Athabasca.

Before 1914 the campus was just a big field and not at all level. I have often seen deer run across the campus in the early days. The land was high where the new Administration Building stands and was very low at the north end of Assiniboia hall. In 1914 levelling began, using man and mule-power, a big levelling machine with twelve mules pulling and six mules pushing. You could hear the mule skinnners swearing all over the campus. The football grid was started in 1913 by Prof. Edwards and some good games were played down there before the first war. An open-air shooting range for C.O.T.C. was where the Works Department now stands.

### III

#### EARLY DAYS IN ATHABASCA HALL. 1914-15

*I begin "taking care"*

*Examinations*

*Conversazione*

*Faculty personalities*

*The War*

*Arts Building opened*

*I begin "taking care"*

During the winter of 1913-14, I had the job of checking the loads of bricks that were being delivered for the University buildings. It was a nice job and paid \$3.00 a day. All I had to do was to check the loads and see that there were 1,000 bricks in each load. Between times I could sit in the office and keep warm. It suited me fine for a winter job, but my luck did not hold. One morning Dr. Tory came over to me during his daily walk and asked me what I was doing. He told me he had something different for me and asked me to call at his office at ten o'clock the next morning. So the next day I put on a decent suit and at 10 a.m. proceeded to the President's office. Mr. Ashworth (the first Bursar) and Dr. MacEachern were there with the President. They had my new job all figured out, but they wanted to discuss salary. I was finally hired at \$80.00 a month, plus room. Mr. Ashworth did not think I was worth that much but Dr. MacEachern did. (I didn't keep that salary very long for as soon as the war started, \$15.00 a month was taken off.)

And what was the new job? At this time eighteen students were in bed with mumps. Some were in the old Infirmary in Athabasca and the rest in the north end of Assiniboia. So my first job was to take care of them—feed them, bathe them, and keep the rooms clean. This was quite a job as I had never before been a nurse maid! Dr. Greene was the house doctor. Some of the boys were very sick as "the mumps had gone down", and I had to bathe them in bed.

This job lasted about three weeks and I was very busy carrying all their food from Athabasca kitchen, taking care of their dishes, and so on.

All the students recovered; some too fast. They were full of tricks and would often pull one on me. One Saturday night they told me not to wait until they had finished supper, that they would clean and stack the dishes for me. Their dishes had to be kept separate and sterilized. I carried them in a Sunlight Soap box, so the boys were most kind and packed their dishes into the box. They put the bowls in the bottom of the box, filled them full of water, and placed all the plates and other dishes on top. The next day being Sunday, and as I had my best pants on, I was so pleased that the boys had done such a nice job for me. But as soon as I lifted the box, the water all poured down my pants.

Another day they asked for beans—to play games. After they got them, beans were everywhere. They would shoot them at students and faculty coming in the angle door.

After my job with “the mumps” had finished, I took over the dining hall and gymnasium. To wax and polish the dining room took a week of evenings, from seven to eleven each evening. I would work in my socks as the floor was just new. There was no electric floor polisher, just a weighted brush, and it was quite a job for one man. One good thing was that there were very few tables to move as three parts of the dining hall were empty. It was a lovely floor and I was scared to even see a scratch on it. The University had had to wait for the oak to lay the floor, and when it did arrive it was laid and scraped in one day. This took twenty carpenters, with two men scraping, and one man sharpening the blades. All they had was a blade on a long handle which they pulled over the new laid floor, but they did a good job.

### *Examinations*

All examinations were held in Athabasca Gymnasium and Dr. Sheldon was in charge. My job was to see that the place was ready, all tables numbered, the room ventilated, a jug of water and a glass on the supervisor’s table. We opened the doors at 9 a.m. for three minutes and closed up until 9:15 for late-comers. I stayed around to check anyone who had to leave the room, to see that they did not look at books or papers or talk to anyone, and to make sure that the clocks were correct. All professional exams were also held there, and water was needed because most of them sweat it out—some even fainted. Miss Ruby Clements, the first woman lawyer in Alberta, wrote her examinations in Athabasca gym, as well as many of our present-day judges.

The dental exams were also held in Athabasca Hall. Two or three dental chairs would be put in a classroom and the students would get to work making plates and filling teeth. This was all before the University had a dental school or a law school.

### *Conversazione*

1914 saw the first conversazione at the University. The buildings were all opened for guests, a canopy was erected from Assiniboia to Athabasca so that no one had to go outside. Labs were all opened, too. A big dance was held in the dining hall, supper was served, and all that goes with it, and everything was very formal. It was one of the big events on the campus. I only remember one other being held, in 1919, and it was in the Arts Building with supper in the Mining Lab. Charlie Hepburn from over town did the catering.

### *Faculty personalities*

Dr. and Mrs. Sheldon, when first married, used to live in Athabasca Hall on the second floor. Every day I used to put ice in their ice box. Mrs. Sheldon had been Adviser to Women Students; she was very nice and would give me a few candies.

Miss Russell arrived during Exhibition week in August, 1914 to take over as dietitian. Her first job was to re-plan the kitchen. It had been built only the year before . . . by Mr. Burgess, a Scotsman. But Miss Russell was also Scotch and she got her way. The kitchen was all changed around, walls torn down, new equipment bought, and a service room added. This was all arranged over a cup of tea in her suite.

Dean and Mrs. Howes and two small girls were in Athabasca in Dr. McEachern's suite, as he had gone to Europe.

That same year, 1914, I used to carry messages for the late Judge Howson to Miss Carmichael, who was secretary to the Registrar in Assiniboia Hall.

Professor Francis Lewis, of Botany used to stay in one of the Assiniboia Suites. He was a fine English gentleman to anyone that met him, but his poor wife had to stay down in the janitors' room many times to keep out of his way. She would say, "The master is terrible today." Once when he was not feeling very well and had to stay in bed, he called her over to bring him some books. As soon as he got them he pitched them all back at her. Her own words were, "My dear, will you bring those books to me. Now get to hell out of here!" She was a dear old soul, and I felt sorry for her many a time.

In those days all the professors who had suites had their fires lit every day. It was quite a job to clean out and lay five or six fires every day, as well as carry up a big scuttle of coal to each suite.

### *The War*

August 1914 saw the First World War started and soldiers using the University grounds for training. Many students did not return for the

fall term, but we had a few new ones in to take Medicine. Pembina Hall was finished, and the south end occupied by nurses; the north end was labs and classrooms.

In 1915, the Agriculture students came into residence. Mr. S. Fife left with the P.P.C.L.I. (He was killed overseas.)

The year went very well. The C.O.T.C. were drilling with wooden rifles, marching up and down in front of Athabasca Hall. Even Dr. Tory went on parade.

#### *Arts Building opened*

The Arts Building was opened in the fall. The first big function was a Red Cross dance held in Convocation Hall.

Most of the classes and labs were moved from Assiniboia and Pembina, but the Provincial Laboratory was left in Athabasca until the Medical Building was built. A man by the name of Peverley was appointed Superintendent of Buildings, but he could not agree with Miss Russell, and he was soon moved to the Arts Building.

## IV

### HIGH SPIRITS . . . PRE-WAR

*Opening the High Level Bridge*

*Athabasca student raids*

*Bathroom accidents*

#### *Opening the High Level Bridge*

The High Level Bridge was finished in 1913. At the initiation ceremonies that year the students broke down the barrier and crossed the bridge, led by a student named Sandy Carmichael riding on a donkey. They were the first people to use the bridge. In later years a student drove a car right across the top level of the bridge. And another time two students were going tobogganing and arrived at the street car tracks just as the street car came along. Students on the car helped tie the toboggan to the back of the car in order to give their friends a tow across to the hills on the north side of the river. All went well until the street car stopped just before it started across the bridge. The toboggan slid under the back of the car. However, when the car started again, they managed to get the toboggan free and they rode along very well. But the street car gathered speed and this made the toboggan sway from side to side—so much so that the boys could see over the edge of the bridge with each outswing. You may remember there was no railing. Both students managed to roll off and remain on the bridge; and finally recovered enough to crawl the rest of the way; but they were too badly scared to go tobogganning that evening. The students in the street car thought it was a good joke. No one ever tried it again.

Another time some students hung a “body” from the girders of the bridge.

Before the days of traffic lights, a policeman always directed traffic at Jasper and 101st Street. A student from Fernie, B.C., one Saturday night, went over and engaged the policeman in conversation while another student placed a grave stone at the base of the pole in the centre of the street. The inscription read: “Edmonton is dead”.

### *Athabasca student raids*

One night in March the boys got going. They raided Alberta College (as it was called in those days) now St. Stephen's and dumped everybody out of bed and came back to residence here with lots to eat—sealers full of nice home-canned fruit, etc. I don't remember who got the bigger share, Athabasca or Assiniboia, but it tasted good. This was a good start, and someone in Assiniboia got the idea to raid Athabasca. Well, they got into Athabasca, turned all the garbage upside down, mostly on top of Assiniboia boys as they came up the stairs. This did not stop them, so they turned on the fire hose. It was a nice fight while it lasted. After driving Assiniboia home, the boys from Athabasca went over to Assiniboia and got the same reception. I had never seen so much water coming down the stairs, and I had never seen the buildings so clean. After they had had enough, most of the boys helped to shovel out and mop up the water. The front hall of Athabasca was covered with about 2 inches of water so we opened the front doors and pushed it out. Early next morning you could not tell that there had been a raid as all the hoses had been put back tidily and the buildings were nice and clean. Everybody had settled down. Then Mr. Bowers, the University Librarian, opened the stack room that was in the north end of Assiniboia and found all his books were wet. The water had dropped from the ceiling. No one had thought of that. But it was a good night as far as the students were concerned; no one was hurt, and everyone had a swell time. Of course, the students paid for their fun. And they were a good bunch; most of them left for France late in the year.

I stayed in Room 71, Athabasca, so I was always handy for any activities and enjoyed the fun with the students. This was the time that Harry Nolan, Roy Jackson, Phil Galbraith and Russell Love, and others were in residence. The year went along all right, with an Alumni Banquet, etc., and Summer School beginning in July.

A big husky fellow named Sweetman lived in residence. He was a good all-round athlete, but specialised in shot and hammer. Mr. Skarin also lived in residence at that time and in the spring of 1914 he got married. He had a nice home already built in Garneau. The day of the wedding, Sweetman plastered the home with a big sign, "Just Married".

The first men students in Pembina Hall got the idea at initiation time of cutting the hair of every freshman. There were some great times over there with tubbing and throwing students in the showers, etc. But one night they pulled the large marble slabs down and smashed them to pieces. They had to pay for the damage and it cost them plenty, so they were quiet for a while.



At Alberta College (now St. Stephens) on Hallowe'en Day I saw the Principal's buggy on top of one of the towers in the front of the building, and a sign from the High Level Rink, about 40 feet long, on the top of Athabasca Hall.

Rev. Coatsworth lived in residence in those years. He was studying medicine. We also had Mr. Carswell living in. He had a coyote skin for a bedside rug. Some of the boys cut a piece of fur from the rug wrapped it up nicely and placed it on the Christmas tree—a gift for the Rev. Mr. Coatsworth.

#### *Bathroom accidents*

One day one of the maids got locked in the bathroom on the third floor of Athabasca and could not get out. After making lots of noise and shouting, she opened the window and saw a workman on the ground below. She shouted: "Ho! Ho!" and waved at him to attract his attention but all he said was "Ho! Ho! yourself." She had to stay in there for several hours until some one missed her and unlocked the door from the outside.

This reminds me of an incident that happened later, in the 1920's, when an Icelandic girl was the maid in the south wing of Assiniboia. She was a nice looking blond girl, about 30 years old. One day she had to hurry to the bathroom and the nearest one was in the north wing of Athabasca, Room 47. Now a well-known Calgary lawyer was a student those days and lived in Room 55 Athabasca, and the nearest bathroom was Room 47. On this day, Christina rushed into Room 47, took her master key and locked the door behind her, and then found the aforementioned student on the seat. It was a very small room and quite crowded with the two of them! Christina said, "Excuse me sir," and tried to get out the door again. But the key would not work. The student tried it and couldn't make it work either. Finally he took the key, climbed out the window, intending to go around and unlock the door from the outside. But the maid climbed out the window after him; and you can imagine what it looked like to see a student climbing out of a bathroom window and a maid climbing out after him! I like to remind him of it whenever I see him.

## OVERSEAS WITH THE XI FIELD AMBULANCE

*Joining up with Dr. Moshier*  
*Unit at M.A.C. Winnipeg*  
*Arrival in England*  
*In France with Col. Moshier*  
*Disappearing bottles*  
*A Mock Convocation*  
*A fragrant comrade*  
*End of the war*

*Joining up with Dr. Moshier*

In the fall of 1914 I joined the 101st Edmonton Battalion. Prof. Edward's father was their Colonel. I wanted to get away, but everyone said there was lots of time. My brother had been in the 63rd Battalion for over a year and was still in Edmonton.

But now there was a chance. Thirty-two students who I knew very well had enlisted in the XI Field Ambulance. Sixteen of them were medical students and others were theologs from Robertson Lodge, the Presbyterian College. This unit, originally known as the Western Universities Overseas Field Ambulance, was formed with the idea of enabling university men to serve to-gether overseas. The Alberta boys were the nucleus of the unit and began barrack life sleeping on the floor of Assiniboia Hall.

I would never have got away with the XI Field Ambulance if it had not been for Major Heber Moshier. He was a fine gentleman, a good soldier, and an excellent doctor.

Dr. Moshier had graduated in medicine from the University of Toronto at the age of 20. His father was chief inspector of schools in Toronto and their home was on Bloor St. Dr. Moshier practised in Calgary and was a member of the Reserve Army there. He came on the U. of A. staff in 1913-14 as Professor of Physiology.

In March 1916, I pestered Major Moshier until he accepted me with the students. But the next day he came to give me my discharge, some

one had made such a fuss about his taking me away. Everybody wanted me to stay here and go, if I went at all, with the 196th Battalion. But I had made up my mind and left the following day for Winnipeg with the unit.

#### *Unit at M.A.C. Winnipeg*

We were billeted in the Manitoba Agricultural College (M.A.C.) which is now the University of Manitoba just outside Winnipeg. We arrived at M.A.C. at about 4 p.m. by streetcar. We were lined up, told to get to the stores and receive our uniforms, be dressed as soldiers and be ready to parade for supper. Well, you can guess what kind of soldiers we looked like. Half of the uniforms did not fit and the way the boys had their puttees on they looked fine! But after going to a tailor in Winnipeg and with Sgt. Hammond's help, we were soon smart enough. We stayed in the mens' residence at M.A.C., two men to a room, and we ate in the residence dining room. Life there was not too bad; we had concerts, etc., and a good swimming pool. The last week there we were moved to the gymnasium and had to sleep on the floor to toughen us up. Some of the mothers who visited the boys felt very sorry for them—little did they know what their boys would be sleeping on in a few months. We only stayed in Winnipeg about two months. The time was taken up by route marches, forming fours, and stretcher drill, and hearing lectures from officers who had been overseas and who were now attached to our outfit.

Col. J. D. MacQueen, who had been over with the Third Field Ambulance, came back to take command of the XIth at Winnipeg.

#### *Arrival in England*

In May we embarked from Halifax on S.S. Adriatic in convoy with S.S. Baltic and the old Empress of Britain, each vessel crammed with troops. The cruiser 'Drake' was our escort. In spite of submarines, we got over to England safely and trained at Bramshot Camp for a short time. We arrived in France early in August in lots of time to take in the Somme and all the rest of it.

Colonel MacQueen left the unit in May 1917, and Major Moshier then took over as Colonel in charge.

#### *In France with Col. Moshier*

In France, I was the colonel's batman. We would go up the line together on an inspection trip to see the boys in the unit and when we got back to camps we had a cup of coffee and then a bath. Col. Moshier carried a little canvas bath with him, and I hunted up hot water from the cooks, or someplace, and got out clean clothes. While the Colonel

had his bath, I used to rub his back; then before the water got cold, I got in and he rubbed my back.

If ever he got a parcel from Mrs. Moshier or his parents or friends, he told me to open it and see if his wife had sent a pair of socks she had knitted or anything else of that nature. He would write and let her know he had received them, but he divided everything with the boys. He had a pair of high boots which he used to pack with a couple of bottles and often after a long day we would have a night-cap together.

Col. Moshier was very hard to wake in the morning so he told me he did not care what I did or said to him as long as he got up. I took him at his word one morning and told him a few things and pulled off all the blankets. From then on he was soon up in the morning.

### *Disappearing bottles*

The night before Col. MacQueen left for England and Col. Moshier took over, the officers staged a big mess dinner. A Captain Turnbull was sent to a B.E.F. Canteen to get fresh vegetables, liquor, etc. He arrived back in camp at about 10 p.m. the same evening to find the mess closed. As he was on duty in the hospital that night, he unloaded there. The beds were made of stretchers supported on two trestles to keep the beds off the ground and away from the rats. The hospital was a large tent. We were on the Vimy front. The Captain had the orderlies unload his car and store everything under his bed. The cases of liquor were unloaded first and covered by a blanket. Then the Captain, who was very tired and himself "feeling no pain", went to bed and to sleep very quickly and had a good night's sleep. He woke up bright and early and called some of the boys to load the supplies for the mess dinner; but they could not find the liquor—just the empty cases. Someone had removed the liquor right from under the Captain's bed while he slept. You can imagine his surprise! And it was not long before the Sergeant Major and all the N.C.O.'s were searching everywhere, in all the kits and dugouts; they turned everything inside out and upset everyone in the unit. But nothing could be found. So a car was despatched immediately for a fresh supply. The search continued but nothing was found even though everyone was lined up and searched and even breaths smelled! They kept a sharp lookout for over a week but nothing was ever discovered and we moved to another camp at the end of the week.

A few days later some of the boys were missing from parade and we heard they were up before the C.O. I thought nothing of it at the time, but after we came back to Edmonton and the U. of A. in 1919 we had a reunion and party at Puggy Emery's home. Then the story was told about the missing liquor. Some of our U. of A. students had stolen the

liquor while the Captain slept, and had sunk it in a small river at the back of the camp, suspending the bottles by string round the necks. And for months they would go and bring in a bottle or two and have a party. They dared not use more than a bottle or two as some one would soon have caught on.

#### *A Mock Convocation*

In the spring of 1917, the boys in the Unit staged a Mock Convocation in one of the large huts at Chateau Du La Hague on the Vimy front. We had moved up from the Somme early in December and had used all the side roads in order to keep the main roads from congestion. Our transport, under Captain Sterling, took a different route. We marched all day and got to a resting point at about 6 p.m. expecting to find the transport there and the cooks ready with supper. But somehow the transport had got lost and we had nothing to eat nor any blankets or anything to keep us warm. But they put us in an old broken-down barn with straw to sleep on. The transport arrived during the night and we got breakfast and moved off during the morning. At the Mock Convocation the Officer who had been in charge of the transport was given an L.L.D. for his wonderful painting, "The Lost Transport".

Our academic procession was quite a sight, with hoods and gowns made of everything from a sand bag to a canvas waterbucket.

Several members of the XIth would have graduated that spring at Manitoba or Saskatchewan. In fact, their degrees were granted in absentia on account of military service Overseas.

#### *A fragrant comrade*

One of our Alberta graduates who was with the XI Field Ambulance had quite a ducking one day. We were on the march back from the Somme and were billeted at a farm home for the night. The officers were in the farm house and the men were in the barns. Anyone who has been in France knows that the farm house sits back from the road with the barns on both sides and the cesspool in the centre. The mornings were dark and when we had to run for breakfast we had to watch our step and not cut corners or we might land in the cesspool! We had all been issued new uniforms before we left the Somme and all the boys looked very smart. Well, this well-known druggist cut a corner too sharp and fell into the cesspool up to his neck. Everything was packed ready to leave so he couldn't get any clean clothes that day. He rode all the way in the ambulance with two overcoats over him and feeling very sorry for himself.

In June 1917 we had a reunion of all the U. of A. boys who were in France with the Canadian Corps. They came from different battalions

and units. It was a very nice affair and I believe it was the only time so many from the U. of A. got together; and many who were there that night did not return to Canada.

In October 1917, while on leave from Vimy Ridge, I was married at St. Giles Church, Norwich.

Col. Heber Moshier was killed in action in September 1918, and was buried near Arras. He was only twenty-eight years old. His name is on the roll in the lobby of Convocation Hall.

### *End of the war*

We ended up in Mons, November 11, 1918. We spent the winter in Namur and Brussels and left in April for England where I stayed until September 6, 1919. I arrived back at the University of Alberta before the end of September and started to work. The men in the XI Field Ambulance were the finest bunch of boys I have ever met.

## VI

### THE BOYS COME HOME

*Veteran students. 1919*

*Armistice Ball*

*Cannon on the Campus*

*Social Life*

*Class Spirit*

*No more gowns*

*Suite 326 . . . a mantrap*

#### *Veteran Students. 1919*

I arrived in Edmonton on Friday night, September 1919, about 9 p.m., and spent Saturday shopping and meeting friends and relatives. I slept in Athabasca Hall on the Saturday night, and had a good look around on the Sunday. The place was all upset. Pembina and Assiniboia Halls had just had all the partitions put in to make them completely student rooms. New furniture had arrived and had to be set up, and the students were expected in a few days. So I started in myself on the Monday.

My room in Athabasca Hall was No. 24, and was very handy for myself and everyone else. Quite a number of the boys I had been with overseas were now back in residence, and there were others I had known before I left, so I did not feel lonesome.

There was the freshman initiation, and lots of sophmores thought they could initiate the returned boys. But they were badly mistaken. The returned men would have nothing of it and it made a bit of bad feeling for a while, but before the term was over everyone got along well. And I believe that lots of the returned boys helped and enjoyed initiating some of the freshmen.

This was one year that stands out in University history. These returned men got no D.V.A. allowances. They had to pay their own way. The most they got from Canada was \$450 for a single man and \$600 for a married man. But they found the money somewhere. One student told me that he spent \$2,000 that session . . . and did not make his year! He wished he had it afterwards!

Lewis Brothers Cabaret had just opened on 101st Street. It was quite a place. I am sure that lots of the old boys will remember it. The old Big Four Hockey teams were playing those days in the Arena, and Jack Hay's taxi used to charge three dollars to take the boys out. Then they would go to Lewis Brothers, and get home about 6 a.m. . . . generally bringing a dog with them. I had to wake up lots of the boys for lunch. This happened quite often, and I have put the odd one to bed.

### *Armistice Ball*

The University gave the returned men permission to have a dance in Athabasca Hall on November 11, 1919; an Armistice Ball. This was a great night for the boys to let loose. The lounge was decorated to represent a dug-out with sandbags and trenches, beer bottles and candles, steel helmets and all kinds of souvenirs including guns, bayonets, Mills bombs, etc. It was like the real thing, even to a few old grey shirts over the windows. The dance was free to the returned men, and the University paid all expenses. The boys had a real night and everybody had a most enjoyable time. These were prohibition days . . . and Steen's Drug did a real business at \$7.00 a bottle.

### *Cannon on the Campus*

The night before was the time that the boys brought the cannon on to the campus. Wop May, who was a student then, took one of his father's trucks and hauled the cannon from one of the armories. Of course, they did not ask permission to take it. But it somehow got on to the campus in front of Athabasca Hall. I found the boys lots of old newspapers and some broom handles, and a bucket of water. They tore the newspapers and damped them down and rammed them into the barrel of the cannon with the broom handles. They fired the cannon quite a few times. The report was heard all over the city and all the windows were jarred in the University buildings. There was quite a fuss over town about stealing the cannon.

As the steam line was only then connected from Pembina Hall to the Power Plant, the ditch was left open. Often it was used for night manoeuvres by the boys, and they had a lot of fun charging Pembina, etc. Mr. W. Jewitt, L.L.B., of Trail, who lived those days in Room 122 Athabasca, could tell you about it better than I can. Or ask Mr. Bob Cameron of Ottawa. He could tell you a better story. Mr. Cameron is the fellow who married Miss Batty who was nurse in the infirmary.

The nurses' sitting room was Room 1, a nice place for the boys to have tea. Every afternoon the steam pipes would rattle about 3 p.m. It was the signal that tea was ready, and the boys would go down and spend a pleasant half hour.



### *Social Life*

In those days at the beginning of the term we had the Sophmores' Reception to the Freshmen. It was a formal dance held in the dining hall. Then came the Junior Prom before Christmas, and the Christmas Banquet and Dance. The Med Ball and Engineers' Ball were in January, followed by the Senior Spring Formal; Under-Grad Dance; and the Freshman Reception to Sophmores, and any other dance that was put on by the students. Also, the President's Reception to the staff, and later the Premier's Reception, were also held in Athabasca dining hall. That made at least twelve formal dances during the fall session, not including the Faculty New Year's Eve Ball or Queens University reunion, and so on. We used to have a banquet a week, some large and some small.

Then there were law luncheons and commerce luncheons at midday. The Med Club and most other clubs held their meetings in the lounge in the evenings. We were always busy and often hardly had time for our meals. For dances it used to take the student a month to get the decorations all made. I have seen the ceiling of the dining hall all covered with blue paper with stars shining through. If my memory is correct, Dr. H. Thornton helped with this, as in was an Ag Dance—the Under Grads in the early twenties.

### *Class Spirit*

The spirit of the students in those days was much better for the University than it is now. It was a *class* spirit; and the boys used to stick together and do everything for their class. Today it is all for faculty or fraternity—the class spirit has gone.

### *No more gowns*

From the beginning of the University until 1920, all students as well as professors wore gowns to their lectures and it looked like a university to see the black gowns flowing as the students crossed the campus changing from lecture room to the other buildings. The men students told me they preferred to wear gowns as it saved their clothes. They could wear any old thing underneath a gown. And the gowns used to be handed down from seniors to freshmen.

### *Suite 326 . . . a mantrap*

After the first war, Prof. L. H. Nichols came to live in suite 326 on the third floor of Athabasca Hall. This was a suite that had quite a reputation as a love nest. In the early days, every bachelor professor who occupied it got caught by some lady. For instance, Prof. Burt and Prof. Stanley Smith both were married while living there.

To make sure he did not get caught, Mr. Nichols had the room colour changed. It must have done the trick, for he was saved. So was Prof. J. T. Jones who lived in the same suite some years later.

The suites in Athabasca used to be quite a social centre with afternoon teas and parties. Prof. Strickland stayed in 232 in the early twenties and this is where he saw the "fairfields" of Alberta. He married Miss Alice Fairfield from Lethbridge.

## VII

### COLLEGE HUMOR IN THE TWENTIES

*The Piano movers*  
*The flying bedstead*  
*Tricks foolish or funny*  
*The woman in 215*  
*Murder by Hill and Waldo*  
*The O'Brien boys*  
*A glass eye*

#### *The Piano movers*

On a certain Saturday night during the early twenties, some senior students who had just come home from a night out, got the idea of entertaining the girls in Pembina with a sing song. After some discussion (some wanted to back out) it was decided to bring out the piano from the lounge. The piano was equipped with glass castors and it was quite a trick to roll the piano without breaking the castors. But the boys were raring to go, and there were enough of them to move six pianos. The Chairman of the House Committee who was with them and who had had a very pleasant evening, began to think that things were going a bit too far so he slipped away to his room. The boys slid the piano across the lounge until they hit the steel threshold to the front hall breaking two of the castors. They kept on pushing and the broken castor gouged the oak floor of the lounge in a good many places and left a track down the corridor. By the time the piano had been pushed over two more thresholds there were no castors left. Somehow the boys managed to get the piano into the bathroom on the first floor south which faces Pembina; then they opened the window and serenaded the girls across the way singing all the old songs from the first war—some of which were all right and some were not. Anyway they all had a good time; I don't know if the girls did. Then they pushed the piano back to the lounge and left it sitting there all lop-sided and looking as if it had had a hard night.

On the Sunday, the House Committee and the President of the Students' Union (H. Thornton) all got together to see what should be done. They went over to see the Provost (Dr. MacEachran), but the boys who did the moving were over to see him too. There was a bit of bad feeling for a day or so and the guilty students were fined \$15.00 each to pay for repairing the damage to the floors and the piano. They did not mind paying in the least; but were sore at the chaps who slipped out of the group. I think that some of the girls in Pembina rather enjoyed it.

### *The flying bedstead*

One Saturday night I was coming home while it was still day light. Looking up between Athabasca and Assiniboia I saw what I first thought to be a magic carpet, but later I found it was a bedstead fully made up. It seemed to be floating in the air about three storeys up. How this was done I do not know as I only saw it swinging in the wind. I afterwards learned that the students went to the University Farm and got all the baling wire they could find, joined it together until it was long enough to reach across the gap between the buildings. They tied it to each leg of the bed and raised it up to the third floor. It must have taken a dozen boys as the bed had to be taken outside and raised from the ground. They twisted the wire around the fire escapes and cut it off short. As soon as the owner of the bed came home he came to see me asking how to get it down without smashing it. So I found him some long ropes and he and his friends cut one wire at a time and tied the rope to it until all four wires had the ropes attached. Finally they let the bed down and it did not get damaged in the least. But some other students who were watching and not helping got up on the roof of Athabasca and threw water on them. Finally they all quieted down and everybody went to bed to get a long sleep in on Sunday. Saturday was always bad as it was mostly on Saturdays that the boys stepped out.

### *Tricks foolish or funny*

Sometimes the students do foolish tricks, but sometimes they are very funny. Some of their poorest jokes were in connection with fire equipment. The fire horns used to be connected with the meal bells and they were very easy to set going. The students would push a pin through the cable and this would connect both wires and the horns would start blowing—usually in the middle of the night. And we had to go to the bottom of the old power house and disconnect them from the batteries.

A student who lived in Assiniboia brought some fish oil from the Zoology Lab, and he poured some on the radiators in various students' rooms. When the heat was turned on it smelled very powerful. To retaliate, the victims took turns tapping on the wall by their "enemy's"

desk. They changed over every hour or so, and the "tap, tap, tap" kept up all night.

One of the favorite tricks was to move all of the student's belongings from his room into the bathroom, his furniture, clothes, pictures, and all were arranged there. This removal was usually done while a student was over town celebrating, and when he returned he woke the whole corridor to help move his furniture back; but some just went to sleep in the bathroom.

Some students were so nervous that they would keep their doors locked day and night, fearing that some one would come in and borrow a book. Students have sometimes borrowed my master key to get into a room just to disturb the books and move a few things so that the occupant would worry about it for a week.

And often the boys blocked up keyholes with chewing gum, or took the pins out of the door hinges so that the door fell the minute it was touched, and then usually a can of water was placed on top of the door to fall the minute it was touched.

Another favourite trick was to fill a bottle with water and put it at the bottom of a student's bed. And then tie a string to the cork and tie it to the spring. As soon as the student's feet touched the bottle, he would feel down for it and pull it out, but the cork would come out and you know what would happen to the water. Sometimes it would be coloured water.

And often they would lift the bedspring off the legs of the bed and set it back without clamping it in. The bed would look as if it had never been touched; but as soon as the student tried to get into bed it would collapse with a bang and disturb the corridor and give the boys a good laugh.

One of the boys in Assiniboia was very frightened of "catching" any disease that was going. So one of his neighbours put spots of ink on his chest and got some fellows to help him down the hall on his way to the Infirmary. But he managed to "faint" just outside the nervous chap's door. So the students opened the door and put their "sick" friend on the bed. When the poor fellow heard that a sick boy had been lying on his bed, he wouldn't go into the room until the linen was changed, and he examined his chest every day for two weeks and reported to the Infirmary every morning.

One weekend when the U. of Saskatchewan was visiting the campus, some one got into the residences (Pembina included) and put honey or syrup on all the toilet seats. I phoned the Bursar's office to report it to the secretary, and the reply I got was, "Oh, how sweet!"

One night the freshmen were over town at a show and on the way home some of them thought it would be a good idea to pick up a few signs as souvenirs. It was the fashion in those days for students to bring home all sorts of things. So some started to pull signs off the stores and when they got as far as Bowen's Grocery on 6th Street, two of the boys took a sign from each side of the doorway. It was not long before the police wagon was on the scene and out jumped two big cops. Most of the boys beat it, but the two with the signs stood on the sidewalk and were soon thrown into the wagon and hustled off to the station where they were locked up. When the others got home they told the story, and it wasn't long before the Police were phoning Mr. Jones (Professor in Residence) to come and bail out the students. So I drove Mr. Jones to the Station and it took about two hours for a magistrate to come over and before all the business was done. Then the boys were summoned to appear in court for stealing signs and damaging the store front. It cost them a lot of time and money, and they were good boys all the rest of the time they were here.

One night after the Men's Athletic Banquet, which was always held in Athabasca Lounge, the boys were going home by the Medical Building. There was a row of nice young trees growing in front of the building and all along 89th Avenue. But by next morning they were all broken down or pulled up and no one ever knew who did it or how it happened. (?)

Once a well-known medical student who drove an old Buick was coming home on a Saturday night and drove his car over the curb on 88th Avenue outside the Premier Brownlee home and broke down the trees in front of it. You can guess that he heard about it.

Maybe a well-known engineer will remember returning to the campus in formal dress the afternoon following the engineers' banquet and dance, and having to sit and rest occasionally on the wooden side walks outside Assiniboia.

One of Alberta's prominent citizens lived in Room 118, Athabasca. One night his mattress got on fire while he was in bed asleep. When he woke and discovered the fire he ran to the bathroom with his underwear, soaked it in water and ran back and wrung the water on to the fire. You should have seen his room the next day. water everywhere, burnt mattress all over the floor. Of course he paid for a new mattress.

#### *The woman in 215*

One night during the late twenties— when I was living in Room 24, Athabasca, I had just got nicely to bed when a knock came to the door. This happened often as students were always wanting something, and it was nothing unusual for me to be disturbed a few times during an evening.

But this was a very funny request, and something I had not experienced before. A boy wanted me to help remove a woman from a student bed where he said she had "passed out". I asked where the student was who occupied the room, and was told that he had passed out in another room. So I just told the boy that he had better get some students to help him and get the woman out as soon as possible. I didn't want to know anything about it so I could not be answering questions the next day.

But in a little while a member of the Men's House Committee, K. Thompson, was at my door telling me the same story. He just had to get help and did not want too many students to know about it. But I still refused to go with him. Then I tried to go to sleep but there was so much running around above me that I could not. At last curiosity got the better of me and I put on my dressing gown and when upstairs. I found the room all right, 215 Athabasca, and to my surprise there *was* a lady in the bed—a nice young blonde. And the students in the room were having lots of fun. The lady was lying on her side, facing the wall, and you can guess the discussion that was taking place around her. She was well dressed and very "appetizing". One of the students brought in a senior medical student to check her over. He looked very professional with his stethoscope in his pocket, etc. He had a long consultation with the students, and decided she was suffering from alcohol poisoning. Then he adjusted his stethoscope to his ears, put his arms around the lady to bring her over to give her a thorough examination. But in doing so he pulled one breast right out of place. I can tell you his face was red! (Today he practises medicine in Saskatchewan.)

The story was this: the boys had dressed up one of their classmates with wonderful clothes and a wig and put him in bed in Room 215. Then for over two hours they looked for students to carry her out. A well-known Senator who was President of the Students' Union was one who helped to carry her out to a waiting car. The student who acted as the woman told me that he was carried outside a dozen times that night and that his earrings would drop off every time. The boys pretended they had to be very quiet and careful about the escape; and of course they fooled all the boys who came home late.

### *Murder by Hill and Waldo*

There was once a murder behind Athabasca Hall. One night as I was making my rounds in Athabasca I found two students sitting in the lounge. As it was late and no one else was around, I wondered what was up. At first I thought they were trying to get into the dining hall, but then I noticed they were dressed in old clothes and no one who did not know them or who did not hear them speak would have guessed them to be

students. Their names were Bob Hill and Charlie Waldo, from Calgary and Medicine Hat. They did not want to tell me what they were doing, but they assured me that nothing would happen in residence. Then they emptied all the ash trays into their pockets, matches and all. I thought it very funny. One said, "Should we tell him?" So they made me promise I would not say a word to anyone. They said they were going to commit a murder behind Athabasca Hall and if I heard a fuss or any excitement, I was not to worry. My family were living in Athabasca at that time so I went down and told my wife the story.

It was not long before all the students were running here and there, and the House Committee came to see me to tell me there had been a murder in the bush behind the residence. I loaned them flashlights and after a while I went around the buildings and looked outside. Big fat policemen were running everywhere and all the students were excited. The students told me that two drunks had come up the back road behind the residences, stopped where they could be seen and heard and started to argue and swear. Then they slipped into the bush and the students could hear them fighting, apparently over a bottle. But they moved farther and farther into the bush. Finally there was a great scream and a couple of shots. Now the students became alarmed. The students who lived in 315 Athabasca told me he had seen them from the start as he had been leaning out of his window. As soon as the shots were fired some one phoned for the police and it did not take them long to get here. There were about fourteen of them. With revolvers drawn and flashlights blazing they started to look for the murderer. They found the track into the bush and where the men had first stopped; the snow was trodden down and a few cigarette butts were lying about; then they followed another short trail and found a few more butts; then they came to the final stopping place. There was blood everywhere, and a trail of blood leading through the bush.

Waldo and Hill had slipped through the bush, back by the University Farm buildings, (where the Nurses' Home now stands) and had returned to the residence the front way. They changed their clothes and joined in the search for the murderer. Eventually the situation became so serious that they thought it over and told the police it was all a joke. The police then recovered their courage and bundled the two boys into the police wagon. It took quite a lot of talking to get the boys released.

But you should have heard the stories the students told about the police and the way they told them. Of course lots of student helped the police with advice, etc., telling them the blood looked like red ink. One cop said, "I know better than you—it's blood. I know blood when I see it." (Of course, it was red ink.) Other cops advised the students to



get back into residence if they did not want to be killed. It took quite a time for the students to quiet down that night, and it gave them something to talk about for a few days.

Jack McAra and Charlie Waldo both lived in residence and studied French with Dr. Sonet. Waldo told me that one day Dr. Sonet called him up at the beginning of a lecture and said: "Mr. Waldo, I have to congratulate you. You have beaten Mr. McAra. You made 16 marks and he made 14!" Anyhow they both graduated from U. of A.

### *The O'Brien boys*

We already had one O'Brien boy in residence, then for the Christmas holidays one arrived from Regina College and yet another one from Kingston Military College; so now we had Herb, Gurth and Eric; all three about six feet tall and all well built—quite a trio to have in residence at one time. It was very nice to see them walking across the campus, and it was something else to have them staying here. They were always up to something.

For one thing, Mr. Don Cameron (now Senator Cameron) had left his Ford car behind Athabasca Hall, and one morning the O'Brien boys noticed it there. They didn't see why they should walk if the car would run at all. But Mr. Cameron had taken the battery out. But this made no difference to a man from Peace River—they had it going in no time on the magneto. What a time they had that week driving everywhere. One night the Ford slipped into the ditch by the Medical Building, and there it stayed, and froze solid, until Mr. Cameron returned and got it out himself. He found the block was split. He was mad, and who wouldn't have been? It didn't make any difference to the O'Briens; they knew they had to fix it so they appealed to their father who sent a new block (not the money) and the boys installed it.

One night when the three of them were here they came home feeling high and got the idea of dumping everyone out of bed. As it was Christmas holiday time, not many were in residence, but all who were got dumped out, including the staff and the professors. The three O'Briens could handle anything that came along and no one with any sense would stand up to them. I guess that was one of the best weeks of their lives; they really enjoyed Christmas holiday in residence. Two of the boys are now dead; Herb was killed in a car and train accident, and Gurth was killed in an aeroplane accident, but I believe Eric is practising medicine somewhere. They all lived in residence at one time; Herb (or Alec) studied Agriculture, then Gurth came and studied Medicine, and later Eric also studied Medicine. Gurth was Chairman

of the Men's House Committee for one year—the best chairman we ever had here.

*A glass eye*

One day a student from Rocky Mountain House came to me, he had his hand over one eye, and in his other hand he had his eye. It seems he was washing in the bathroom and his eye fell into the sink and broke. He was upset and did not know what to do for a minute or two. I do not think many of the students in residence knew he wore a glass eye. He was a good medical student and graduated from U. of A.

## VIII

### LIQUOR IN RESIDENCE

*No problem in early days*  
*Prohibition years after 1919*  
*Liquor allowed in residence*  
*Enforcing new regulations*  
*The empty bottle problem*  
*Memories of "dead soldiers"*

#### *No problem in early days*

For the first few years the residences were open, liquor was no problem. Of course there was always the odd student that came home on a Saturday night a bit under the weather; and I would not say that at Christmas and such times that there was not the odd bottle brought in. Liquor was cheap then—only about a dollar or two a bottle. In those days the boys would go to a formal dance or a banquet and never think of taking a bottle along; and before the first war we never found bottles left around after a dance nor was there any running up and down to the rooms at the time.

#### *Prohibition years after 1919*

But when the boys returned in 1919 liquor was flowing pretty freely. It had started in 1918 when some of the first boys returned from overseas. These were prohibition days when you could not buy liquor without a doctor's prescription and that was supposed to cost \$2.00. I believe that doctors were allowed a certain number of prescriptions a month and the drug stores did the selling. There were no liquor stores, government or otherwise. The nearest drug store to the University was Steen's, at the end of the High Level Bridge. The system was supposed to be that your doctor gave you a prescription which you took to the drug store and procured your bottle. You did not always have to be sick to get a prescription but you had to know whom to deal with. Whisky was worth from five to seven dollars plus the cost of the prescription.

1919 was a year of good parties and lots of poker games. Many misdemeanors were overlooked or excused as a result of the war and

everyone was in sympathy with the returned men. Years went by and the returned men left; but they passed on something that the rest had to follow.

### *Liquor allowed in residence*

A bunch of students who worked at Banff one summer formed a club called the Rocky Mountain Goats. This was the start of the fraternities. They had no house or any place to meet so of course they met in residence and later I believe they met in a professor's basement. Then other fraternities were formed and their meetings were held out of residence; but their parties were held in residence. Every week there would be wild parties going on in some part of Assiniboia or Athabasca. Some of the older students said that because liquor was prohibited some students could not control themselves. So the University gave permission for students over 21 year of age to have liquor in their rooms. This was the start of many bad things.

### *Enforcing new regulations*

Non-resident and fraternity boys came to residence to do their drinking. Every Saturday night there would be big parties, and windows would be broken, bottles thrown all over the walks, garbage cans dumped down the stairs, and the buildings left in a mess for the weekend. This continued for quite a few years until the University passed a regulation that no liquor should be brought into residences or any other building on the campus. Dr. Wallace said it was no use making regulations unless they were enforced—the job was to enforce them. Everyone thought it could not be done, and, at last, the job was pushed on to me. I did not relish the prospect, but told the President I would do it, and I did. I reported fifteen of my best friends among the students and they were fined and put out of residence the first term after the regulations were made. However, I never lost a friend nor were there any hard feelings between any of them and myself. I warned them all that it had to be done and told the bad ones that they should never have come back into residence. One said that I would never catch him but that if I did I should turn him in. Well, I caught him and turned him in. He was put out of residence.

You have to play ball with the students—not sneak on them. But if you catch them fair and square, they will take their medicine.

Everything was much better after this. I would not say that there were no more parties or that no liquor ever came into residence afterwards, but from then on the boys would pull their blinds down and keep fairly quiet, and there was little damage to the buildings. I have waited around residence from 10 p.m. to 4 a.m. to make sure the boys came in

quietly. Many nights the boys would say: "Aren't you going home?" Or they would watch to see if I went to Athabasca from Assiniboia, and so on. They got pretty smart. Some would get tight down town and the others would bring them home in a taxi or car, and the sober ones would come in first and look around to see where I was and if I was there they would engage me in a conversation and keep me occupied while their drunken pals were taken to their rooms. I knew all the time what was going on and would tell them about it next day.

As conditions improved, all I had to do if I heard any noise in a room was to tap the door and ask what was going on, and the noise soon ceased. At the dances, which were always held in Athabasca, there would be liquor but it would be kept in the rooms and it was easy for me to tell where the liquor was by the number of times the students visited their rooms. Non-resident students kept their coats downstairs and at times I would get the Chairman of the Men's House Committee to go down with me and shake coats. One night at a Med Ball the President of the Med Club was late—it was after nine when he got there. He was in such a hurry to get into the receiving line that he took his coat and hat off and threw them down in a corner of the basement. One of the caretakers, seeing such a good coat thrown on the floor, picked it up, and would you believe it, it had covered a 40-ounce bottle of Scotch whiskey—a full bottle. I told the caretaker to bring the bottle to me and to say nothing about it and to put the coat back where he found it. It was not long before the Med Club President began to shout. He cursed and swore, and threatened to knock the block off the fellow who had stolen his whiskey. Everyone at the dance knew he had lost his bottle. When he came to me I told him I had never seen it. He stayed sore all evening. I took up the matter with the House Committee who wanted to keep the bottle; but it was given to the Medical Services and I believe you would still find some of it left in the Infirmary! I reported the chap to the Provost who fined him \$10.00.

One evening about the end of March when the snow was nearly gone I was walking around the building and I saw what looked like a couple of empty beer cans. They were half covered with snow under the fir trees outside Room 1, Assiniboia. I walked over to pick them up to throw them in the garbage. But when I lifted them I found they were both full and quite untouched. I locked them up and then went into Assiniboia to see who would claim them. I asked all the students if they knew who had put the cans there, but I also told them that if they did claim them I would have to report them. The beer never was claimed and I never heard a word about it afterwards, so I just poured it all down the sink. There must have been some disappointed boys that evening—they had left the beer in the snow to keep it cool. The rooms in

the building were much too warm for storing beer and we often found a few bottles of beer cached away in the basement but it never took long to find them—the student never knew what happened to them and probably blamed each other!

### *The empty bottle problem*

After the Second World War the D.V.A. boys all came to residence as well as the January class of 1946. I thought that residence life would be the same as in 1919. But these boys were different: they got down to work. Now I am not going to say that there was no beer or liquor in residence; there was. They drank beer mostly and the boys kept things under control themselves, no windows were broken and no mess made. One veteran asked in the spring what he should do with all his empty bottles. He had a large truck full and some also packed into his cupboard—twenty-four dozen, by actual count. In spite of the congestion, he kept his room very tidy and was a nice quiet boy.

In years gone by, after parties and banquets over town, the boys would return to residence feeling high and often bring with them non-residence friends who were too far gone to go to their own homes. Our boys would put the drunks on the floor with pillows under their heads and leave them to sleep it off. I've seen lots of them, dead to the world.

During these last ten years, residence has been a pretty good place for fellows to live. There have been no raids or bad conduct on a large scale. You could not find a better bunch, considering there are about four hundred men. There is no reason these days for any young freshmen not to come into residence, and it is a far better place to live than most, and there is no encouragement for any young man to go to the dogs. Discipline is now administered by the House Committees and the Wardens, and the residences have never been better. They are more home-like, with curtains, lamps, Simmons beds, in all the rooms.

Now (1956) there are over 500 persons living in residence.

### *Memories of "dead soldiers"*

This had been a long cold winter. I believe November 11th, 1955, was the first bad day, and the weather had not been good except for the odd day or so all winter. There was still lots of snow around on April 1st. I could compare it with the winter of 1919-20 when the snow came early and stayed late—and in the spring of 1920 you could see bottles popping up through the snow like snowdrops! And although Pembina Hall was full of ladies, more bottles popped up there than anywhere else. We picked them up every day and more appeared as the snow receded. I'm sure that anyone who lived in residence that spring will remember the "dead soldiers" lying around the campus.

## IX

### INITIATIONS OLD STYLE

*Hazing the Freshmen*

*The Ordeal*

*Overtown parades*

*The Powlett Case. 1931*

#### *Hazing the Freshmen*

As soon as a freshman arrived on the campus (or even before he got here as some sophomores used to meet the trains), he was taken care of by his big brothers, the sophs. His hair was cut—a nice job, right up the centre of his head. He was given a number, a hat, and a bib. Sometimes he was given odd socks, one green and one gold, to be worn outside his pants. He was not allowed to use the front entrances to the residences, but only the side doors. He had to clean sophomores' shoes and anyone else's who happened to come along. He was made to do any odd job that there was to do, even to going to Tuck to buy soft drinks, cigarettes, etc., and often never getting paid for them. His time was always taken up until supper. After supper he was sent to bed about 7 p.m., but wakened about 8 p.m. and sent to the toilet whether it was necessary or not—and made to stay there until it was—and there was always a sophomore watching.

If any trunks came in or if the sophs wanted to meet the trains for seniors or other students, the freshman was wakened up, made to dress and get to work. If he was not disturbed this way, there was always a gang of students ready to have fun at the expense of the freshmen. Another stunt was to make a freshman warm up a seat for a sophomore. I have often found freshmen asleep sitting on a toilet seat waiting for a soph who had forgotten all about him. Tubbing was always bad as often a freshman was taken from a warm bed, dumped into an ice cold bath when he was hardly awake, ducked a few times, and then asked to sing the Varsity yell. As soon as he got the Rah, Rah, Rah, he would be pushed clean under and nearly drowned. Another game was chariot racing in the corridors. The sophs would pick teams of freshmen, pair them off, and one would sit on the floor and the other would grab his

legs and pull him down the hall. Of course, they would be nude. You can imagine a bunch of young freshmen, the first time away from home, huddled together in the corner of a corridor, and a bunch of sophs hanging around with little sticks. Well, the boys who finished the race first could go to bed, but the losers either got the showers or a tub. A little water was usually sprinkled on the corridor floor to help them along in the race; and some smart guy would usually throw down some sand. Most freshmen had red bottoms by the time the game was over.

Often a horse trough was placed on the campus and filled with water and I have seen it covered with ice as it got chilly during the latter part of September or early October. Many a freshman has had his tubbing in the open air. It would not take him long to get back into the buildings.

Another game was for about twenty sophs to stand in the corridor legs wide open and slats in their hands. And as the freshmen crawled through their legs they beat or paddled them on their behinds with the slats.

### *The Ordeal*

Sometimes these games went too far and some students could be very mean with the freshmen. All this went on for a week or two before the initiation day proper. This started at 5 a.m. All freshmen in Assiniboia and Athabasca were wakened, dressed in their pyjamas and brought down to the lower gym in Athabasca. Here a medical student tested their hearts, they were blindfolded and made to stand in line, and then one at a time to the gallery in the upper gym. This took almost an hour, and when the line of freshmen was longer, it took two or three hours to reach there. A plank was fixed over the top raid in the gallery, and the freshman was told to walk out or he was guided by the sophs. At the end of the board he was to bend over and grasp his arms around his legs. He was then hit on the hind end by a sand bag swung from a rope tied to the ceiling. This knocked him into mid air and he was caught in a fireman's net and bounced to the ceiling a few times. Any student who went through this can tell you what it felt like. Eddie Wing, who took architecture, missed the net and either hit the ring of the net or the floor; and spent quite a while in hospital. After the freshmen had been bounced around, a kind soph would ask him how he was feeling and suggest he take a rest, offering him a chair. He would be glad for a rest as he had been standing for an hour or two. But he was in for a shock, for as soon as he was comfortable and beginning to think that the worst was over, the boys would turn on the juice and the poor freshman would jump sky high. By this time he needed a little nourishment so he was spoon fed from a dish of stuff that had been mixed the night before. I cannot say what it was, but it looked bad enough—but of course the



freshman could not see. Time now for the "operation". He would be undressed, placed on a rubbing table, checked by medical students, and of course found to need an operation. There would be a consultation around the body to decide what to do first. Generally a sharp piece of ice did the trick . . . it was drawn sharply across the stomach. Then the patient was bandaged with nice warm fly paper, with always an extra one thrown in if there was hair on the chest. I can tell you that they stuck real well. Sometimes the sophs used violet ray. This was really funny. Some would be really scared and others could not stop laughing. Others had to be tied down to keep them from jumping off the table. In those days there were rings and hoops hanging from the gym ceiling, and barrels would be tied to these; freshmen would be placed in the barrels and spun around, then made to crawl through a culvert while a soph ran up and down the outside with short pipes to make all the noise he could. The freshman, on emerging, could take off the blindfold. Then, after having his head plastered with calomine, he could return to the gallery to watch the other fellows go through it. He was given a glass of milk, a bun, and an apple, and told to be ready to parade down town.

#### *Overtown parades*

The overtown parade was a highlight. It was headed by a made-up band. On Jasper Ave, you could see a Freshman pulled along in kid's wagons, sitting on a large-sized breakfast cup and wearing a big sign, "Keep the Pot Boiling"; and the big six-footer who pushed a baby carriage with a little guy in it wearing a bib and holding a bottle of milk. They had hobby horses and raced along Jasper, and the freshmen were made to clean the streets with small brushes and trays. They painted signs on the sidewalks with toothbrushes and white-washed the rocks on the river bank so that you could read "Garneau" when crossing the High Level bridge. Then all came back to the campus to clean up in time for supper. The evening was spent having a theatre party in the old Pantages Theatre on 102nd Street and Jasper Avenue. Then, as well as the usual show, the freshmen would do their stuff on the stage, and get pelted by the sophs with tomatoes, eggs, etc. Everybody came home all played out. But after it was over, they said they were glad they had taken the initiation.

There was nothing hidden about the proceedings. Nothing was done behind locked or closed doors. The professors used to enjoy watching. But, like everything else, it went too far, so about 1935 the University saw fit to do away with hazing and initiations altogether. It had its good points and it kept the class spirit together, and also did a lot to keep freshmen in their place. The freshmen of today are very different and a bit too cocky sometimes.

As far as the residences are concerned, they are better places to live in and certainly much less work to maintain. Now it is peaceful and quiet in contrast to the old days of initiations.

*The Powlett Case. 1931*

This unfortunate affair was one of the reasons why old style hazing was discontinued.

Mr. Powlett arrived at Athabasca Hall about 4 p.m. His room was No. 41, north basement. I happened to be going by just as he arrived with his keys. There were two keys on the ring, one for his cupboard and one for his door, and he was very nervous and having trouble opening the door. I stopped and helped him to open the door and lift his trunk into his room. I had a little chat with him as I always did with all the students. He seemed to be a nice boy but didn't know what University was all about. Other students had threatened him and promised him a bad time during initiations (and initiations were rough in those days), so the boy was all worked up before he ever got started.

I told the student who was in charge of initiations about him and also some of the other students and when I said he was very nervous they said "He's always been that way!" They paid no attention to my remarks. I called the same evening to see Powlett but some sophomores had taken him out for the evening. I noticed that he had unpacked his trunk and on his dresser was a large photograph of R. B. Bennett. I asked him if he was a friend of his and Powlett said that Bennett was a friend of the family. The next day I saw him going around with a card on his head. Printed on the card in large letters was "R. B. BENNETT". The students had told him he must wear this card at all times. He even wore it in the dining hall until I told him to take it off.

Powlett did not settle down to eat his meals, so I spoke to him again. He was always very nice and willing to do anything I asked but his nervous condition seemed no different from the first time I saw him. At all initiations the students seemed to pick some one for the goat and this time it was Powlett. I do not believe he was treated any worse than many others, but if anyone knows Mr. Mark McClung he will remember that he was the judge of the Sophomore Court and was very smart and bitter with his tongue. I spoke to the President of the Students' Union and to other persons about Powlett and they assured me he would take no harm. He had been here three days and must have been very tired as the sophomores had given him very little time to sleep. I called to see him on the Wednesday and the Thursday evenings. Thursday he was in his room, very upset, and he had a bad nose bleed. I did what I could for him and got him to bed and put a sign on his door for no

one to disturb him. Then I phoned Mr. MacEachern and told him the state Powlett was in, but as the time was after midnight and Powlett seemed to have settled down I thought he would be all right until morning. But he was up early and in for breakfast. Dr. MacEachern came over and saw him and put him in the Infirmary so that no one would disturb him. He settled down a bit but wanted to go to the dining hall for meals. In the afternoon the doctor sent him to the University Hospital. This did it! Powlett thought he was being thrown out of University and it made him much worse than he had ever been.

The consequences of all this were very serious. Powlett suffered a nervous breakdown and was admitted to a Mental Hospital in Ontario. His father sued the University for \$64,000 damages and won his case. With costs and attorneys fees, initiation that year cost the University about \$100,000.

But I still say that Mr. Powlett did not get any worse treatment; in fact less was done to him than to others. I have seen many students take far more and not complain when it was over. Initiations were a good thing when kept under control. But, as always, there were some students who did not know where to stop and initiations got out of hand. It was a good excuse for the senior students to have fun at the expense of the freshmen, and I am sure there are many old graduates who are not sorry they went through the rough initiation even if they were kept on edge for a week or two.

After the Powlett case was closed, some students placed a grave stone on the campus at the cross walk by the cafeteria. It was inscribed:

Initiation is dead.

Cost of Funeral . . .

One Hundred Thousand Dollars.

## X

### SUMMER SCHOOL

*Beginning. 1912*

*Social life and plenty of it*

*Trouble with mosquitoes*

*Romance on the rocks*

*Tennis Courts*

#### *Beginning. 1912*

The first summer school was in 1912, and Dr. Miller from Camrose was the Director. Not many students attended and I don't think there were any University courses offered; it was more or less fun to come to summer school. The studies were not hard and there were plenty of social activities as well as tennis, baseball, swimming, and golf. For a number of years, every night after dinner a short play or stunt of some kind would be put on by a group from each table in the dining room. The "performances" were on the lawn in front of Athabasca, and at the end of Summer School the one that was judged the best got a prize.

#### *Social life and plenty of it*

There was always a garden party for everyone, and a banquet at the close of the school. At first, dances were held in Athabasca Lounge but later they were held in the gym three times a week, Tuesday, Friday and Saturday, from 8 until 11 p.m. For years the student provided their own orchestra, but when the school became larger an overtown orchestra was hired.

Every night except Sunday there would be two or three baseball games going on, plus basketball and volleyball. The swimmers got up at 6 a.m. and went to the South Side Swimming Pool to have an hour's class before breakfast, and in the very early years there was no pool on the south side and the swimmers had to go over to the Y.W.C.A.

Teachers who were marking papers for the Grade 12 examinations used to stay in residence, but since World War II only students taking courses have been accommodated.

Summer students have their fun just the same as the winter students. One fellow at Summer School owned a red coupe. One Sunday morning he found it outside Pembina connected up with the fire house. And one Summer School student who was living in Room 49 Assiniboia was disturbed about 1 a.m. by three ladies appearing in his room. They had not come through the door as it was locked. He did not know what to do. They teased him a bit and he got scared and ran upstairs to get the House Committee to help him. Finally the ladies departed and the rest of the building settled down to sleep. The rest of the boys in the corridor were very much annoyed that the student had made so much fuss and they thought that even if he was scared he could have left the girls for the others! However, after this incident screens were placed on all basement windows—not to keep the flies out.

#### *Trouble with mosquitoes*

The residences were not always full for summer school, and it was not always pleasant on the campus in the summer time. During wet years we were pestered by mosquitoes and they were very bad. During one wet summer we were checking through the empty rooms in the residences and found that one room was being used by some one. I asked the watchman to keep a lookout and I used to check on my trips around the buildings, but neither of us caught anyone. However, one night when I had no flashlight, I tried the door, unlocked it, and stepped in. It turned the light switch but no light came on—the bulb had been removed. I knew there was some person (or persons) in the room. I struck a match and, as you might guess, I found a man and a woman, standing by the bed. I called them out into the hall, and recognized them both as students who lived in residence. I really told them off and pointed out how foolish they had been. The woman did not say a word, just hung her head. But the man tried to explain how it all had happened. He said there was really nothing wrong—it was all the fault of the mosquitoes that would not leave them alone. The couple had been enjoying the evening under the bushes but the mosquitoes were biting fast and furious; so the young people just walked into Assiniboia Hall, and finding quite a choice of empty rooms, chose No. 15 as being very handy. They had kept out of the way of the mosquitoes for quite a few evenings! The man took all the blame and was very sorry. I told him to forget; and that I would forget it; but for him not to try that stunt again as he was lucky the night watchman had not found him. But the next morning before 7 a.m., the student was knocking at my door, telling me he was so sorry, and offering me money to “fix it up with me”. I told him again that he was a damn fool and if he even mentioned the incident again I would report the whole matter. He would have given me anything

just then, but afterwards would have told everyone that he had had to "fix me up" to keep me quiet. Neither he nor the girl could look me in the face afterwards although they both ate in Athabasca dining hall for the rest of the summer.

In the early summer schools the students were left to themselves no restrictions being placed on what time they returned to residence at night. They would come home at all hours and then not too quietly. Men would hang around until the early hours of the morning and I sometimes chased them out myself after 2 a.m. Sometimes the girls would come back to residence after dances, pick up a blanket, and make for the river bank; you could sometimes see twenty or thirty girls leaving the residences with their blankets. One night there was a heavy thunder shower at about 2:30 a.m. We were living in Athabasca then, and I pulled up the blind to see what it was like outside. As the lightning flashed I could see the couples running for the buildings. It was like a rabbit warren. Afterwards we had a man on duty all night during summer school. In those days the students used to call summer school "Dr. McNally's Matrimonial Bureau". And I guess that was a good name as lots of couples did meet first at summer school. But at summer school now we get persons from 17 to 70, and it's not so much fun.

#### *Romance on the rocks*

The two large stones outside Athabasca Hall have always been very useful, not only for boys to jump over, but as a resting place for summer school students when they are coming home at night. Many a romance has started on those rocks. Before the trees were planted along the front of the residences there was one poor little fir tree between the two rocks. It never had a chance as the boys would play leap frog over it. The rocks were placed just far enough away from Athabasca so that the couples who used them could twitter without disturbing the residents. But at one summer school when Dr. Doucette was the Professor in Residence he told me that some of the older ladies complained because they could not sleep for the noise of the younger students coming home at night and lingering beneath the trees. I could quite understand that the older ladies felt they were underprivileged. Dr. Doucette asked what he should do about the complaint and I suggested that he announce in the dining hall that the young things who had to twitter should get their twittering done before they got to the trees around the residence. He did not seem to realize what "twittering" meant. But he made the announcement and the girls all knew what was meant and he got a big hand!

#### *Tennis Courts*

Years ago there was a *Tennis Club* for Professors and staff. There

were 8 courts, four behind Pembina hall that were built in 1919, and another four behind Assiniboia Hall built in 1914 (now a parking lot). Jack Webster was the caretaker for the courts. In summer school the tennis club kept the courts behind Pembina for their use, and the courts behind Assiniboia were used by the summer school students. The Assiniboia courts were smaller and not so well made. Mr. Webster gave all his time to the Pembina courts and often only watered the others. The students resented this, especially as there were more students using the poorer courts. So they published a cartoon in the Summer School paper, showing the Assiniboia courts with the tapes broken, nets in bad shape, and courts like sand hills; but the Pembina courts were perfect. This made Mr. Webster very angry, so they apologized to him in the paper, stating that they did not believe the same man could possibly take care of both courts and they never realized that one man could do such a good job on one and neglect the other! And as a little extra job I had to gather up the nets on Saturday night and hand them out after dinner on Sunday as no tennis was allowed before 1 p.m. on Sundays. Whose idea it was I do not know, but it was another bit of work added on. And I don't think it made any difference to students going to church, but it goes to show how narrow minded some people were in those days. If at any time there were students out bouncing a ball around on Sunday morning, someone would phone and make a complaint about it.

## XI

### INCIDENTS OF THE '30s

*Fire in Athabasca Hall*

*Rush call from the Royal Alex*

*A framed portrait*

*Kulberg's cat*

*Keeping the prof awake*

*Saskatchewan goal posts*

*Boyish fun. A beer party in Assiniboia*

#### *Fire in Athabasca Hall*

One Sunday night during the thirties, about 10 p.m. after the students had finished playing badminton in the gym, they came running to tell me that there was a fire in the dressing rooms. They were where they are now, but had wooden floors over the steam pipes. Somehow a cigarette butt had got down one of the cracks and in no time the floor was ablaze. The student got busy with the fire hose from outside and did a good job of putting out the fire. Someone called the City Fire Brigade, but by the time they arrived the fire was under control. It could have been very serious; and as it was, it did \$5,000 damage. As soon as the firemen arrived they began to cut a hole in the lounge floor which is right above the dressing room. In about 15 minutes the fire had burnt out the steps leading to the gym from the back door and the walls to the third floor were very hot. The fire had gone through the walls in the lounge and was going right up to the top floor. The firemen cut holes in the walls to make sure that everything was safe. There was water all over the place and we stayed up all night cleaning up. You could smell smoke for a week afterwards.

After this fire, concrete floors were put in above the steam pipes. We have to thank the students for saving Athabasca Hall that time. Mr. J. T. Jones was in residence and the walls of his room, 327, were quite hot.

Fire would be very serious in the residence, especially in Athabasca and Assiniboia. It would take only a few minutes for a fire to burn the centre of these two buildings. I believe a student fire brigade is a necessary



thing and students should be very careful with cigarette butts, hot plates, lamps and any electrical appliances.

#### *Rush call from the Royal Alex*

One Sunday night a student who was on telephone duty received a call for a Mr. K. who lived in 108 Athabasca. Mr. K. answered the phone and was told it was the Medical Superintendent of the Royal Alexandra Hospital speaking. He wanted him over at the hospital right away. Of course Mr. K. wanted to know what for and was told that a lady in hospital was about to give birth to a child and that he was the father. Mr. K. didn't know what to do and got all upset; he didn't know anything about such things—he didn't even have a girl friend let alone go out with one. After the boys got him settled down enough to talk to him, they advised him to go over to the hospital, and called a taxi for him and sent him on his way. Then they phoned their friends, the internes at the hospital, and told them he was coming. The internes met him and told him that it was all a joke. You can be sure he was mad and the students laughed about it for years. Dr. C. Greenberg of the D.V.A. can tell you the rest of the story.

#### *A framed portrait*

One Sunday at dinner a new portrait was found hanging from the ceiling of Athabasca Lounge. It was a cabinet size portrait of a medical student. He was a very good looking boy and was always well-dressed and groomed. I believe he was a bit conceited and I think the students thought so too. In those days about 30 girls from Pembina used to eat in Athabasca Dining Room and of course they had to wait in the lounge with the boys before going in to eat. Well, beaming down on them through an old toilet seat was the photo of the handsome med. He did not come in until late (I think he was detained by some of the boys); and everyone had seen the picture. I believe the trick accomplished what it was intended it should.

#### *Kulberg's cat*

One year in the spring towards exam time a lot of cats came around the residences; and if you have ever heard a tom cat yowl you can imagine trying to study with a bunch of cats outside your window. This went on for a few nights until a student by the name of Kulberg from Taber, Alberta, who lived in room 101 Athabasca, took a shot gun from his cupboard, opened his window and shot at the cats under the trees between Athabasca and Pembina. Then he went out to see what he had shot. Well, it was a nice fluffy cat; and the fur was so nice that he wanted to keep the skin. So he managed to skin the cat, rubbed it well with salt,

and tacked the skin to his cupboard door. It stayed there until he was ready to leave residence. He wanted to take the skin home with him, but when he removed it from the door, all the paint and varnish came off too, leaving a clear mark of the shape of the skin on the door. It cost him five dollars to have the door refinished. Luckily I did not know at the time (and dared not say anything later), but a well known professor was looking for his cat for days after the skin was on the door. I should have taken him to see the skin, but was afraid his wife would have taken the loss too hard, as the cat was her only "child".

#### *Keeping the prof awake*

I remember a night the boys in Assinibioia were having a party and making lots of noise, so I went up to investigate. I think it was in room No. 319. They were having a good time, drinking coffee and eating cake, but the window was open and you could hear them all over the campus. It was quite late at night so I told them to shut the window and make less noise as I did not want to have any complaint from the professor who lived next door. The boys asked me who he was, and I told them . . . a well-known professor in Political Economy. The student replied: "That-so-and so! He sends me to sleep in his lectures every morning. It's a pleasure to keep him awake." I heard nothing else about the incident.

#### *Saskatchewan goal posts*

During the years that Intervarsity football games were held on the campus, with B.C., Saskatchewan and Manitoba competing, it always went with the game to steal the goal posts, win or lose. After one game, Saskatchewan team took the goal posts along with them to B.C. On their return through Edmonton, our students prepared a reception for them at the C.N.R. station. About 350 students were waiting for the train and when it arrived they went aboard. The Saskatchewan team put up a good fight but they were out-numbered. When our students got the goal posts, they could not get them out of the car via the doors, so they pushed them through the windows. Then they moved off down 101st Street towards Jasper Avenue with about six big fellows carrying the goal posts at the head of the parade. As they were passing the Rialto Theatre, some one suggested they should go in. A labour meeting was in progress so the doors were quickly closed and held, but when the students threatened to use the goal posts as ramrods, the doors were opened and the students marched through, giving the Varsity yell.

They proceeded through a few cafes and on down to the Strand Theatre on 102nd Street and Jasper. Mr. Aberhart was holding a service there. The students argued about joining the meeting, but finally

went on their way across the High Level Bridge, and home to the campus where they raided St. Stephens Hall and had the odd fight. They came across the campus singing and would have gone to their rooms, but some smart fellow suggested raiding Pembina Hall. It was no use locking the doors—they would have been knocked down. They were all over Pembina in five minutes—and all out again in less than fifteen! Then they spent the whole night telling the rest of the fellows in residence what a wonderful time they had had—especially in Pembina.

After any games away from home, the students always came back with a good supply of towels—"C.N.R." or "C.P.R." right down the centre of them.

*Boyish fun. A beer party in Assiniboia*

Years ago two Dickson boys came from Medicine Hat, one was Johnny and the other Charlie. Charlie was a good shot with a .22 rifle. He could pick off the lamps in front of residence from his room. Johnny was good at snaring gophers and he could always catch a few on the campus in the spring. He would put a string around their necks and bring them into the dining room, tie them to the table legs and let them run. It always scared the waitresses. And at Easter the students would bring in a bunch of coloured chicks and let them run all over the tables. And I have heard an alarm clock go off under the professor's table when he was saying grace. Water on the chairs was another trick, and they often put salt in the sugar.

And I well remember a well-known student who was here during the thirties. He was trying for a Rhodes Scholarship, but I found him in the showers in 209 Athabasca, fully dressed in evening clothes, paddling around and having a wonderful time trying to drown his sorrows.

One Saturday night during the thirties a bunch of students purchased a barrel of beer. The party started in St. Joe's. It got so bad that they were chased out of there. So they got hold of a wheelbarrow someplace and moved over to the basement north end of Assiniboia, Room 32 and 34, right below Dr. Sonet's suite.

It was not long before I received a phone call from Dr. Sonet wanting to know what was going on, so I went over to investigate. There was a piano in 32 and the barrel of beer in 34. These rooms had a dividing door. You can imagine how the place looked, and the noise. They had hired the piano from some store over town at three dollars a month. They kept it three days.

## XII

### PEMBINA HALL

*Early history*

*Wardens*

*The Prance*

*Flypaper for a tattletale*

*Intruder in Pembina*

*Locks on the doors*

#### *Early History*

Pembina Hall was completed in 1914, and nurses from the University Hospital moved into the south end in September. The north end of the building was used for classrooms and labs. Pembina was not used for students until 1916 when a few men moved into the south end. At that time the Red Deer Ladies College moved into Assiniboia with their principal, the Rev. Keith.

In 1915 the Arts Building was finished and all the classrooms and labs were moved there leaving the residences empty except for a few students as enrolment had dropped off. The Meds moved to the new Power House building.

In 1918, Pembina was used as a hospital for victims of the influenza epidemic. I believe about 80 deaths occurred there in a very short period.

No more alterations were made in the residences until 1919 when the class rooms were turned into students' rooms and furnished.

#### *Wardens*

When the women took over Pembina in 1919, Miss Geneva Misener was the first Warden. Miss Florence Dodd followed her in 1920 and stayed until 1941 when the R.C.A.F. took over all the residences.

Miss Mary Faunt was Warden for two terms in 1945 and 1946, followed by Miss Constance MacFarlane. Miss MacFarlane was very nervous about fire and in her time the fire escapes were put on the building.

Miss Maimie Simpson had been summer Warden in '45 and '46. In 1948 she was appointed Dean of Women and Warden of Pembina.

### *The Prance*

The annual dance, Pembina Prance, has been held since 1920, and is a closed dance for the people living in Pembina Hall and is put on by the girls living there. For years it was held in Pembina Hall and was always a very nice party. One year the students found a way of getting into Pembina without going through the doors. There is a tunnel that runs from Athabasca to Pembina under the sidewalk, and the boys used to get in to Pembina. There they pulled the main switch and blacked out the whole building. Someone found a candle and gave it to Miss Dodd. Now everything was set for a good time as everyone could see where Miss Dodd was and she could only see as far as the candle would light. It was not long before the boys were all over Pembina—and everyone was happy. Someone soon phoned me and I found the trouble and put the lights on again, but I had to sit and watch the switch for the rest of the evening. Of course the next day there was a great inquiry, some people thought the prank was fun but others took a dim view of it. One student, a Mr. W. Archer, even told the President, Dr. Wallace, that you would have thought it was International Field Day the way the boys' hands were wandering; and this made the rest of the students very mad at him!

### *Flypaper for a tattletale*

About two weeks later we had a formal dance in Athabasca, I believe it was the Senior Formal. We were busy putting the tables back in the dining hall when some students came in dressed in old clothes. I wondered what was up as I had seen these same students an hour before in formal dress at the dance. They came and asked me for fly papers. Of course I wanted to know what they were going to do with them and to make sure that they would not be used in residence. If you know anything about fly papers you will agree that they will stick to anything. The students were Mr. Cameron and Tony Mason. There was a good stock of fly paper left over from initiation so I gave them plenty and they left. Next day I learned what they did with the paper. Cameron and Mason and about four others visited Archer in St. Stephen's College. They told him to dress and come with them. At first he pleaded with them to leave him alone: "Oh, please fellows, leave me alone—I didn't do anything!" But when he found that they meant business, he started to cuss a blue streak. Well, they got him out, dressed him in two overcoats (one on backwards), blind-folded him and took him for a ride to White Mud. There they stopped and held court. He was found guilty and sentenced to be given the "fly paper treatment". It was a cold night so they warmed the fly paper on the car radiator. The victims's hair was

cut straight down the centre and across, and very short, so that it made a nice cross. Then the cross was well soaked with mercurichrome until it showed up well. His head and chest were then plastered with fly paper to keep him from catching cold. They left him to walk back to St. Stephen's by himself. He got back all right, but as soon as he was helped out of his two overcoats, he began to rave; he phoned the R.C.M.P. that he had been kidnapped. He also phoned his parents, and the next day he made a big fuss all over the campus. Of course the boys had expected this and had all worn masks; and I never heard of any of them getting into trouble for it. No one had any sympathy for Archer no matter how much fuss he made. Mr. Cameron, who had been with the avenging students, told me the whole story.

### *Intruder in Pembina*

One night I got a phone message from Miss Dodd. She was all excited . . . a man had broken into Room 3, Pembina Hall, by tearing the screen off, opening the window and stepping into the room. Just then the lady student in the room woke to behold a man in her room. This same girl had bragged to some of the boys that she would not be scared to see a man in her room, etc. Well, now she had one, and the boy who told me about it said he had ever seen a person so scared. She just looked and screamed at the top of her voice, and took off through the door and down the corridor, screaming as she went. When I arrived in Pembina, everyone was up. The girls were all running around the halls and dared not go back to bed. Nobody would settle down until we phoned the police although I was sure it was just a students' prank.

The girl had had cups and saucers on her bookcase and some of these were missing and some were dropped on the grass outside, so it was decided the intruder was a thief. About four detectives arrived and went through everything, making notes, and not helping the girls to settle down. I told the detectives it must have been a prank and after about an hour they left. The girl would not go back to the same room so she slept upstairs with one of the other girls. Next day we got the screen repaired and Pembina settled down to normal life and I forgot all about the incident.

But on Convocation day the same year, a student by the name of Frank Frazer graduated. At the tea in Athabasca Hall he came over to me and said: "Now I have got this (his diploma), I can tell you. I was the man who broke into Room 3, Pembina." Evidently the girl who stayed in No. 3 and some others were out at a party one night and this one said she wouldn't be scared to see a man in her room. So the boys thought they would take her up on it. The idea was to take a few dishes to

prove they had been there and later give them back to her. But it didn't work out that way. So my advice to girls is not to brag in men's company, they might take you up!

#### *Locks on the doors*

I have not mentioned very much regarding Pembina Hall, except for one or two incidents. But in the early days, before the doors were locked at night, you never knew what you might find over there. Some nights when I would go over to put out the lights, I could see or hear the couples scatter, like going into a rabbit warren; and sometimes the lights would be out before I got there! It was a good idea to have the locks put on, in the late 20's, although the students made a fuss about it the first year. And they didn't like the lights around the doors, and said the pathway looked like a landing strip. But they got used to it.

The bushes in front of Pembina were planted too close to the buildings so that when the bushes grew they blocked the light from the windows and the students had to burn the lights in their rooms all day. But the bushes made very nice screens for the couples to linger behind to say their "goodnights". But we had to cut the bushes down, and you should have heard the complaints then. They blamed everyone but me. It left no cover for "twittering", but the girls told me they were glad that the angle doors were still nice and dark so they could say a quiet good night!

## XIII

### THE SECOND WORLD WAR

*The R.C.A.F. moves in. 1941*  
*No. 4 Initial Training School*  
*Dances over town*  
*Sending beds to Banff*  
*Full house. 1946*

#### *The R.C.A.F. moves in. 1941*

Everything went well in the residences until June 1941. In the middle of Farm Young People's Week, I walked the R.C.A.F. to take over. What a turmoil! The whole staff nearly went crazy. All beds were taken out, blinds removed, doors taken away from the rooms, furniture hauled here, there and everywhere. But the airmen were a good bunch of fine fellows who did very little damage to the buildings and although we had three wet canteens, it was two years before I saw an intoxicated airman.

#### *No. 4 Initial Training School*

The three University residences plus the Normal School (Education Building) now became the Initial Training School No. 4. An R.C.A.F. officer paid us a compliment in 1942 when he wrote in a souvenir booklet "The Quarters taken over from the U. of A. proved exceptionally well suited and probably no place in Canada are airmen and officers better housed."

I remember dozens of officers and instructors in the I.T.S. as students who had passed through the university years before.

Every morning, with the band playing, the boys marched down to classes in the Normal. First they marched by 112th Street, then a direct route was laid out through what was then part of the Experimental Farm. This road is now 114th Street.

At first all parades and drill were held outdoors on the campus but in 1942 a Drill Hall with five floors was built where the Students Union



Building is now. After the war the Drill Hall was moved south to face on 87th Avenue.

During the Airforce occupation, I was on loan to the Dominion Government as Barrack Warden, and was responsible for all property including the Normal. Every second week we had an intake and output of from 150 to 200 men, as the Courses came in and were posted away. With double-decker bunks in every room, the highest number we had in residence was 1,200.

In cafeteria style, we fed 600 airmen at a time in Athabasca Dining Hall, each "shift" taking twenty minutes. The Officers' Mess was in Pembina dining room. The University was supplying meals at a contract rate, with the Dietitian, Miss Ruth Eager, supervising the catering.

At night the airmen studied navigation and plotting on tables in the gymnasium, under the supervision of their officers.

#### *Dances over town*

During the war years, 1941 to 1945, all dances and other functions were held over town, mostly at The Barn, a dance hall where the Hudson's Bay Store now stands on 103rd Street; and some affairs were held in the Macdonald Hotel and at the Trocadero. At the time, the Americans occupied Edmonton and the north country while they were building the Alaska Highway. Edmonton was full of them. They would come over to the dance hall and pester to get in; pull out their rolls of bills and want to buy the place. Also, the service police, American and Canadian, paraded through the place. One Engineers' Ball, I remember, they had a large photo of a setter dog over the ladies' powder room, and a photo of a pointer over the men's. Those were good dances and the students used to enjoy them.

#### *Sending beds to Banff*

During the time the R.C.A.F. had the residences, we received frequent requests for beds and bed linen from the Banff School of Fine Arts, F.Y.P. etc. The R.C.A.F. had stored all the beds, linen, and blankets in the Education Building and it was quite a job to find anything because they had everything piled in different places and all mixed up. Mr. Cameron would send a telegram from Banff: "Send 100 beds and blankets at once by truck to Banff School of Fine Arts." Well you can guess what kind of a job it was to get this done, but he always got the equipment he needed. Before the end of the war, Banff had most of the beds and linen from the residences. In 1945 they were returned, the trucks arriving here at Athabasca Hall at 2 and 3 o'clock on a Sunday morning. It is a wonder we ever got everything together again, as bedding was loaned

out all over the place. Farm Young People would need some to set up in a fraternity house, and the Infirmary had a lot of equipment as well as other places. We managed to keep track of everything and get the residences set up ready for the students after the war.

*Full house. 1946*

The boys were very surprised to see me still here when they came back in 1945, the year when the buildings were turned back to the U. of A. Pembina and Athabasca were packed full for summer school, but Assiniboia, which was under repair, was unavailable. Since there was no dining hall ready, everybody ate in the cafeteria, which was built in 1943.

September saw the arrival of a large group of students, and in January, 1946, we had the greatest crowd ever in residence. I took a gang of men over to the American Air Base to equip the huts with double-tier beds, tables, chairs and other furnishings for the January class. But we had put double-tier beds in the residences to take care of the boys until the Air Base was ready, and once they were settled, not one consented to leave. So they stayed with us until August 1946. The overflow was fed in Athabasca Gym, and all went well.

## XIV

### THE RESIDENCE STAFF

*Administration*

*The Maids*

*Mrs. Gray . . . a Dickens character*

*"A Woman's work"*

*The Men*

*Importance of good staff*

*The Infirmary*

#### *Administration*

There have been five presidents since I came here: Dr. Tory, Dr. Wallace, Dr. Kerr, Dr. Newton, and Dr. Stewart. And there have been eight Bursars: Mr. Ashworth, Mr. MacKenzie, Mr. Race (acting), Mr. Newbiggin, Mr. West, Mr. King, Mr. Bell, and Mr. Whidden. All of these men had a part in handling the affairs of residence, and somehow I have managed to get along with them through all their terms of office, and it is a pleasant experience to look back on. I can remember the time when we could not get a washer put on a tap or a nail put in a board without the Bursar's permission. The residences have come through some very hard years and some very poor ones; but today Athabasca Hall can compare with any building on the campus—it has always been the heart of the University.

#### *The Maids*

The University has been very fortunate in getting and keeping good help in residences. The first staff member to mention is Miss Jessie Brown who arrived at Athabasca Hall in June 1911. She was just out from Scotland, a slim, red-haired lady, a hard worker and very conscientious. When she first arrived she had to live in an old shack that stood by the side of the original basement of the Arts Building. Her brother-in-law, William Jullian, was the first caretaker for Athabasca. She came to live in the Hall in September 1911 and stayed until May

1943, when she retired. All the early students remember Jessie, and the early professors and their wives.

And in 1912 came Miss Tina Miller, also from Scotland. In later years she had charge of the Laundry Office and did the sewing for the residences.

Also in 1912, Miss Jessie Mitchell came as a waitress in the dining room. She stayed and worked in Athabasca Hall and the Cafeteria until 1953, retiring at 70 years of age.

Miss Nellie MacPherson who came in 1914 and stayed until 1938 was a very pleasant girl who took care of the students' rooms in the north end of Assiniboia Hall

Nellie MacPherson was a buxom lass, fairly tall, plump, with dark hair. You could set your watch by Nellie as she was always on time and always on the job. This type of person did not lay off for the least little thing but was on the job day in and day out, and thought nothing of working extra hours for no extra pay.

And Miss Hilda Hanna, who came in 1920, still works in the University Cafeteria.

Miss Margaret Olson, who worked in Pembina Hall for quite a number of years, is retired on a pension. And Miss Marion Forbes (the students called her Mary Ann) worked in the south end of Assiniboia Hall for a number of years.

### *Mrs. Gray . . . a Dickens character*

I could not miss out nor forget Mrs. Daisy Gray, an old English lady who washed dishes in Athabasca kitchen from 1916 to 1940, when she retired on old age pension at 70 years of age.

Mrs. Gray was a typical Dickens character. She was born and raised near London, England, married a soldier and had a hard life in England, then came to Canada in 1915, and to the University in 1916 where she was employed as a dishwasher in Athabasca Hall. She was one of the hardest and best worker I have ever seen. And she enjoyed a glass of beer. She would trot off every night to get down town for a couple of beers. In those days you had to walk to the High Level bridge for a street car. Sometimes she would have three glasses and then come home talking to herself. She would tell the odd story that she had heard in the beer parlors, and they were funny. I could fill a book about Mrs. Gray, but I'll just tell one story here.

At this time Mrs. Gray would be about 65 years old, and just skin and bone. I used to drive a Chevrolet and slip down town in the afternoon once in a while. So she asked me if she could go with me as she

wanted to buy some brushes for coffee pots. I took her as far as the old Hudson's Bay store, parked the car on 3rd street so that she knew where it was, and went off to do our shopping. When I came back I found Mrs. Gray already in the car, and she was crying and swearing. She had gone into the store to look for us and then came out of the third street entrance. She thought there was only one step but there were two, and she had fallen down hard on her hind end and could not get up again. Some people had lifted her into the car. But it turned out that she had finished her shopping and rushed over to the King Edward Hotel, lifted a few glasses, and when she got back she hadn't noticed the steps. Well, she moaned and swore all the way home; and claimed I hit all the bumps on the way; and then she couldn't get out of the car so I had to carry her into her room and put her on her bed. Her friends undressed her and did all they could; Nellie rubbed her well with Sloan's and made her as comfortable as possible. But the next morning she was worse, so we had to get Dr. Scott. He said she must go to the University Hospital for X-rays, so I took her down and waited to hear the results. The poor old lady cried all the time I was there, and then Dr. Scott told me I would have to leave her there as she had broken her pelvis. Everyone thought Mrs. Gray's working days were over, but she came back to work in six weeks and carried on for five years longer.

Nellie MacPherson used to read to her for hours.

### *"A Woman's Work"*

In the early days the maids had to do everything. As soon as they had eaten their breakfasts, and before they went to work in the rooms, they had to peel potatoes and get the other vegetables ready for the dining hall. After lunch and dinner they had to help wash the dishes. Often when there were dances or banquets they were busy until one or two in the morning, with only a couple of hours off in the evening.

If a luncheon was on in the lounge or the dining room, the bedroom staff had to rush to get done as much as possible before changing into a black dress and white apron, bib, and cuffs to help serve. After the luncheon, they went back into blue to finish their work in the bedrooms. They also relieved the dining room staff on their days off, so their hours of work were often 7:30 a.m. to 8 p.m. or after. And the wages were from *fifteen to thirty dollars* a month.

They had a half day off a week, either Sunday or a weekday, and often they did not get that as there was no regular time set to be off, and many times in the evenings they had to "baby sit" for the members of the staff, and dared not say "no".

The floors in Athabasca and Assiniboia were old fir flooring, and we scrubbed these on our hands and knees. The maids would do ten rooms each on an afternoon. And the long service room to the kitchen and dining hall had a good white maple floor which had to be scrubbed by hand. Two waitresses would start at one end and two at the other and it would take them over an hour to complete the job. Between times they had to clear and set up the dining room. None of these things happen today as all the floors are covered with tile or linoleum and I have not seen a scrub brush in the last ten years, it's the mop for everything, and now the bed room floors are waxed and polished by the men.

### *The Men*

Mr. James Collins worked in the residences from 1916 until he passed away in the thirties. The last few years he was caretaker in Pembina Hall; and all the girls who lived in Pembina those years remember Jimmy.

Jimmy Collins and I have carried thousands of trunks up to the third floor of these buildings. And years ago the teachers attending Summer School brought all they possessed with them. Their trunks would weigh about two hundred pounds! Jimmy was a good man and worked hard during the war years of 1914-18.

Alec Stanners took care of Assiniboia Hall, and all the suites there. He used to wax and polish the floors for the occupants and do all the other odd jobs. I am sure he was missed by them when he left the U. of A. In his spare time (whatever he had) he used to work for Dr. Rutherford taking care of the garden and pruning the trees.

He is 83 years old and living in Vancouver. All the students remember him as Scotty or Sandy.

Mr. Chris Forbes worked in Athabasca and Pembina from 1920 until 1937. He came from Glasgow; he is living in Edmonton south side.

There are many others who helped to give the residences a good start, but I have mentioned just a few who were best known to the students. The residences were good places to work, not because the pay was good, but it was like home and everybody seemed like one large family. We had our good times and our bad times, fun and troubles, but I don't think anyone regrets having worked in residence.

These were the people who really helped to make residence life for the students; they were all hard workers and did their best for the University and for the students; they did not mind doing a little extra work or a good turn for anyone. Their work is still remembered.

### *Importance of good staff*

In picking staff to work in a students' residence you have to be careful. Everyone cannot get along with students. We have been very fortunate in not getting too many bad eggs. There are lots of temptations such as the students leaving money around; but a lot depends on the type of staff and type of students.

No one can do a good job without the cooperation of his staff; and I have been very lucky to keep a good staff, and must thank them all for the good job they have done and are still doing.

### *The Infirmary*

The first few years of residence we used the basement of Athabasca Rooms 17 to 24, for the Infirmary. There was no nurse in charge; any student who felt ill was put to bed in one of the rooms and given a dose of castor oil, and was later seen by a doctor. Drs. Greene and Gray were the Medical Services doctors. It was left to Jessie Brown and Tina to take care of the boys, and they carried their trays and generally looked after them. Sometimes the infirmary would be full, and it was not until after the first war that a nurse was engaged. The first one was Mrs. Fairbrother, then Miss Batty who married Bobby Cameron, then Mrs. Hays and Miss Raver who married Dr. Harry Banks. Then Miss Lundy who is now Mrs. Evenson, the last nurse in Athabasca until 1942. The R.C.A.F. took over then and built the present Infirmary on the ground where the Engineering Building now Stands, and Miss A. Revell was in charge. There have been thirty to forty students ill in the Athabasca Infirmary with mumps or measles, and so we would have to take over a few extra rooms and put extra beds in all the rooms. But all the trays would have to come from the kitchen. It was quite a lot of extra work but everyone turned in and helped and the students got good attention. The doctors in charge of the Athabasca Infirmary were Dr. Minish and Dr. J. Scott.

## XV

### HOME AND FAMILY

*Bring up children in Athabasca*

*No. 11 built. 1930*

*A stolen flagpole. 1950's*

*Lister graduates*

*Bob and Harry Lister*

#### *Bring up children in Athabasca*

I had been married while on leave in 1917 (Chapter V) to Miss Lilian Priscilla Dyball, who had grown up with me in the village of Hingham. My eldest daughter was born in England.

When I returned to Alberta in 1919, I told the University authorities that I would need a home for my family. They gave us two rooms in the basement of Athabasca Hall as "temporary accommodation". My wife and baby arrived from England in 1920.

We lived in the basement of Athabasca for ten years, from 1920 to 1930, and you can guess what a time we had to raise three children there. Mr. Nichols who lived on the third floor, complained that he heard our clock strike. Our children could not practise the piano because of the noise. There was a regular thoroughfare past our door. It did not bother me as I was never home very much, being around the building 16 hours a day. And often after my family had gone to bed, I would take a bunch of students down to our kitchen and have a party. We would eat all the bread, cake and cookies my wife had around, and she would not know about it until the next day. Then I would hear about it! But the next week we would do the same thing again.

#### *No. 11 built. 1930*

My house, No. 11 on the Campus, was finally built in 1930. Those were depression times and there was no money for trimmings. I hired men to fix up the grounds, paying them two dollars a day with their dinner. They were glad to get it.



### *A stolen flagpole. 1950's*

Just a few years ago, No. 11 was the scene of a student trick. Someone stole my flagpole.

It was a good pole, 30 feet high and set in concrete. One day I missed it, but it might have been gone for a day or two before. Whoever took it had made a good job of sawing it off neatly right down at the concrete. I told the students in residence what had happened and asked them to look out for it. A couple of days later a student told me he had seen some girls with the pole parading down 90th Avenue. He thought they were fraternity girls. I did a little phoning and inside of an hour some boys phoned to say they would be over to see me. They admitted they knew all about my flagpole and they wanted to fix it up. But I wanted the pole back. They wanted to erect another one for me. However, I got the Works Department to replace the pole and the boys paid for it. It seems they had sent some freshmen out to bring back a flagpole from any place . . . little did they think they would take mine.

### *Lister graduates*

My three children are graduates of the University. Both the girls took B.Sc. degrees in Household Economics. Kathleen is now Mrs. Hugh Davidson and lives in Windsor Park. Joyce went on to do post-graduate work at Toronto, and is now dietitian in Athabasca Hall. Ronald took a degree in agriculture and is now with the Dominion Department of Agriculture.

### *Bob and Harry Lister*

A few words regarding my brothers Harry and Bob. Bob has been employed in the Dept. of Zoology since 1923. Harry started in Assiniboia in 1912, then transferred to the Arts Building and was head janitor there until 1940. He passed away in 1945 after a long illness during which both legs were amputated.

Harry was always cheerful and fearless. He lived in Garneau, on 90th Avenue near Dr. Lord and Dr. Pope. On fine days Harry often sat outside in his wheel chair. He used to say "I'm not afraid to die because I know where I'm going. I speak to the Lord and the Pope every morning."

## XVI

### CHANGING TIMES . . . BUT NO REGRETS

*Dining Hall manners, past and present*

*Students today*

*Social life . . . the dances*

*Summing up*

#### *Dining Hall manners, past and present*

Before the last war, the students were held in the dining room for at least twenty minutes, and could leave only after the professor had risen. As many students used to bolt their meals in ten minutes, having to wait the extra ten was very annoying. There would be a rattling of glasses, coughing and sneezing, and all other kinds of noises. This would really irritate the professor and he would look to see what was happening in one corner of the hall whereupon the uproar would start in another corner. In those days there were special tables for Calgary boys, Medicine Hat, Lethbridge, Peace River, etc. You can guess what kind of a place it was as most of the boys had been through high school together and then three or four years in residence. We even had a couple of tables for Jewish boys who had special meals. The method of mixing up the boys is much better for everybody, and prevents formation of cliques. It takes boys a long time to get to know one another. If you ask a boy at any table to name the rest, I don't believe he could do it—they only know the first names.

The students' manners were not too good. They could throw slices of bread to one another much quicker than it could be passed. The head of the table is the man who makes a decent table. If he is a good fellow he has a good table, and it all depends on how he serves the food; he can make a plate look an awful mess. I have often seen a student's dinner spoiled by the way it has been served on the plate. Today the dining hall conduct is much better, and the students will sit for half an hour over their meals, and sometimes longer. At noon on Sunday they sit for an hour at least, and it is the only time they are permitted to smoke in the dining room.

We have every type of boy here, and it is quite easy to see the different types as you glance through the dining room. There are those from the city and those from the country; those that say their grace and others that do not; those that sit at the table correctly and that know table manners; some will dress for meals and others don't care and come in to eat in sweat shirts. On Sunday when they all dress up, you would think it was a different bunch of boys.

### *Students today*

In years gone by most of the students stayed in residence for their entire university course. And you could notice the changes in the individuals and how each developed over the three or four years. But under today's system, all freshmen must be accommodated, so they do not stay in residence long enough to become known. And they do not respect the residence as they know their chances of staying more than one year are very slim. And also today the freshmen are much younger than they were years ago, and these youngsters are not old enough to accept responsibility.

The students seem to have more free time than they used to. Some will get down to studying as soon as possible, but others take until after Christmas, and a few will wait until final exams are near and then plug night and day hoping to get a pass. Very few seem to study with a system and it does not need much of an excuse for them to leave their books. They waste a lot of time in the evenings, most of them do not settle down after their evening meal until after 8 p.m., then coffee time comes at 9:30 to 10:00, and when they do get back to residence it means a bull session, and by the time that is over it is bed time. Some do work late into the night, but very few. Often their lights are on, but no student in the room. There is always the social life which takes up a great deal of time.

### *Social life . . . the dances*

Since 1945 most of the big dances have been held in the old R.C.A.F. Drill Hall which is used as a gymnasium by the University. The biggest and most memorable dance was "Club 400" put on by Joe Shocter. It included a floor show and supper and I have never before or since seen anything like it. The place was packed, tables and chairs all around and not much space to dance. There were cigarette girls with not too many clothes on, and waiters all dressed up. The boys and girls all were having a good time, some standing on the tables, and some underneath. They will all remember it for a long time. But it was the only one of that type ever held on the campus.

The students' conduct has been very good at most dances, but when there are a thousand or fifteen hundred young people out for a night of fun anything can happen, and sometimes does. The last few years there has been nothing like the old-time "spirit", and I don't believe you would find a better behaved group of young people anywhere. But, as I heard a professor tell the students in residence at one meeting, "wherever you find a large group of souls, you will be sure to find a few heels."

Of course there are always a few that will make a bit of trouble, but I have found that if a student does something seriously wrong, and is reported, he will take his medicine like a man. You cannot pester students about little things as it only annoys them and makes them worse. You have to be absolutely fair in all your dealings; for a little ill feeling can grow into a nasty situation—a hostile house. You cannot see everything the students do, some things are best not seen. But other things must have immediate correction. Most students will admit having caused damage to the buildings, accidentally or deliberately.

I have mixed with the students in their games and helped them with their fun. I have been passed along the whole of the top floor of Athabasca over the heads of students. When the big raids were on I would go up to see what it was all about; and some one would grab me up over his head and then I would be passed along from one to another without ever touching the floor. By the time I arrived at the end of the line I would be lucky to have any clothes on. It was all in good fun and I couldn't get mad at them.

### *Summing up*

During my forty-five years in residence I had done almost everything . . . undressing students and putting them to bed, as well as dressing some. I've reported some to the Provost or other University Officials, as well as shielding some when it seemed necessary. I have always tried to be fair to the students and the University. I have helped the blind and the lame. And I've enjoyed some of the parties—not all of them. I've helped students with their tricks and condemned others. I've always tried to make the students' time in residence as pleasant as possible. Some of them have grown from boys to men and I've watched how they developed over the years. It has been a very interesting life. I could write lots more, but I believe I have written enough—perhaps too much! I've enjoyed it all and would probably do the same all over again if I should come this way.

I have tried to make this little story as interesting as I could for those who have ever stayed in any of the residences at the U. of A. I never kept a diary or made notes: this is all just as I remember it, but

I believe everything I have written is correct and true, and I am sorry if I have made any mistakes. And if I have mentioned any names and so hurt any feelings, I do apologize.

I hope this record will bring back some of the pleasant memories of residence life. I myself often think back and recall the old times in residence and the fun and spirit of the students of those days. And I do appreciate having old students drop in to say "hello"; some come along expecting that I had passed away years ago! It is very nice to chat with them all about the times they stayed in residence and talk of other students who were here then, and to find out what they are all doing now. There have been many sons and daughters of the graduates coming into residence these last few years, and it is nice for them to tell me that their father or mother remember me. The first son of a graduate to come into residence was Hank Hankinson from B.C. His father was one of the first medical students and his son came about 1939 or 1940 and also graduated in medicine.

And now I will close, hoping some will enjoy reading this as it is written as if I was telling the story to a bunch of the boys.



*Reg Lister receives from Barclay Pitfield honorary life membership in the  
Alumni Association, May 18, 1949*  
—KENSIT STUDIO.

## CONFERRING OF HONORARY MEMBERSHIP

EMINENT CHANCELLOR:

I ask leave to present to you now Mr. Reginald Charles Lister, Superintendent of Residences, that you may, with the authority of the Senate and Governors of the University of Alberta, admit him to honorary membership in Convocation.

The action of the Senate and the Board in approving Mr. Lister for this honour touched off a train of spontaneous enthusiasm among students, graduates and staff. On Monday the graduating class of '49 admitted him to honorary membership in their ranks, presenting him with an inscribed gift as a memento of the occasion. That evening the University Alumni Association presented him with a certificate of Honorary Life Membership.

Mr. Alan Armstrong, Chairman of the Men's House Committee, in an excellent speech about Mr. Lister at the Class '49 Valedictory exercises on Monday afternoon, included two statements I shall take the liberty of quoting:

He said Mr. Lister, though not a member of the academic staff of the University, had taught the students some of the most important things they had learned here; in particular he had taught them how to live together.

He said also that Mr. Lister struck terror into the hearts of obstreperous freshmen, but no student ever left the residence halls without feeling that Mr. Lister was his personal friend.

I should like to read now what is inscribed on the certificate you hold in your hand:

The Senate and the Governors of the University of Alberta certify by this document to all whom it may concern that Reginald Charles Lister by virtue of his distinguished service for some forty years as guide, counsellor, and friend of many generations of students in residence in this University has been declared to be an Honorary Member of Convocation and awarded all the rights and privileges pertaining to his membership. In testimony whereof are appended the signatures of the Chancellor, the Chairman of the Board of Governors, the President, and the Registrar of this University, together with the common seal of the same.

Given at the University on the eighteenth day of May, 1949, in the 42nd year of the University of Alberta.

—Robert Newton







Printed by  
THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA PRINTING DEPARTMENT  
Edmonton, Alberta



